

WORLD EXCLUSIVE: *STAR WARS REBELS* LAUNCH ISSUE!



STAR WARS

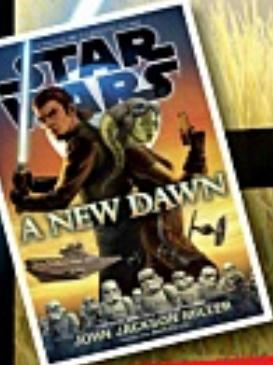
REBELS



EXCLUSIVE!

A NEW DAWN

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Rebels Prequel Novel!



DROID DESIGN!

Meet the Man who
Builds Real-Life Droids!

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SECRETS OF THE SHOW REVEALED!

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"That's it. The rebels are there."

—Darth Vader, *Star Wars: Episode V The Empire Strikes Back*, 1980

It's here! After months of waiting, *Star Wars Rebels* is finally with us! And *Star Wars Insider* has exclusive interviews with the cast and crew of the new show!

We have the lowdown, the insights, and the background for all things *Rebels*! The issue you are holding is the result of the entire team at Lucasfilm Animation generously granting us access in order to provide you, the readers, with every last detail about their work on the show.

Of course some of the *Rebels* team were too busy finishing up the first season to talk about it... Rest assured, we'll be speaking to the rest of them soon, including supervising director Dave Filoni, in an upcoming issue. Indeed, we'll have plenty more coverage in *Insider* as the season continues!

Regular readers might be wondering where the final part of our Tales of the Jedi feature is. We've taken a small break to make room for our *Rebels* coverage, but don't worry, that particular series will conclude next issue!

Don't forget, we really love to hear from you on all things Star Wars! We've got cool signed photos from Official Pix for any letter we print; stunning Kotobukiya statues for our Bounty Hunter winners; and the chance to appear in the prestigious pages of *Bantha Tracks* every issue! What are you waiting for? Write in and become a part of the Star Wars universe!

May the Force be with you... Always.

Jonathan Wilkins, Editor



STAR WARS

OCTOBER 2014

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Docking Bay

THIS ISSUE....

"IF ALL YOU DO IS FIGHT FOR YOUR OWN LIFE, THEN YOUR LIFE IS WORTH NOTHING!"

—HERA SYNDULLA, *STAR WARS REBELS*

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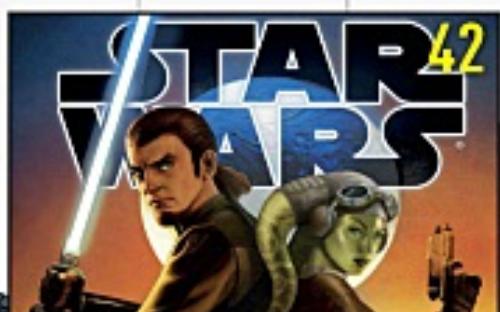
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EXCLUSIVE!

LAUNCH PAD



ALL THE COOL NEWS FROM THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE

STAR WARS REBELS LAUNCHES!

STAR WARS REBELS HAS BEGUN—WITH A MOVIE OF THE WEEK THAT PAVES THE WAY FOR A WHOLE SEASON OF GREAT EPISODES! HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK AT WHAT'S COMING UP...

THE SHORTS

EPISODE 101A: "THE MACHINE IN THE GHOST"

Directed by Dave Filoni
Written by Greg Weisman

EPISODE 101B: "ART ATTACK"

Directed by Justin Ridge
Written by Greg Weisman

EPISODE 101C: "ENTANGLEMENT"

Directed by Justin Ridge
Written by Henry Gilroy, Simon Kinberg

EPISODE 101D: "PROPERTY OF EZRA BRIDGER"

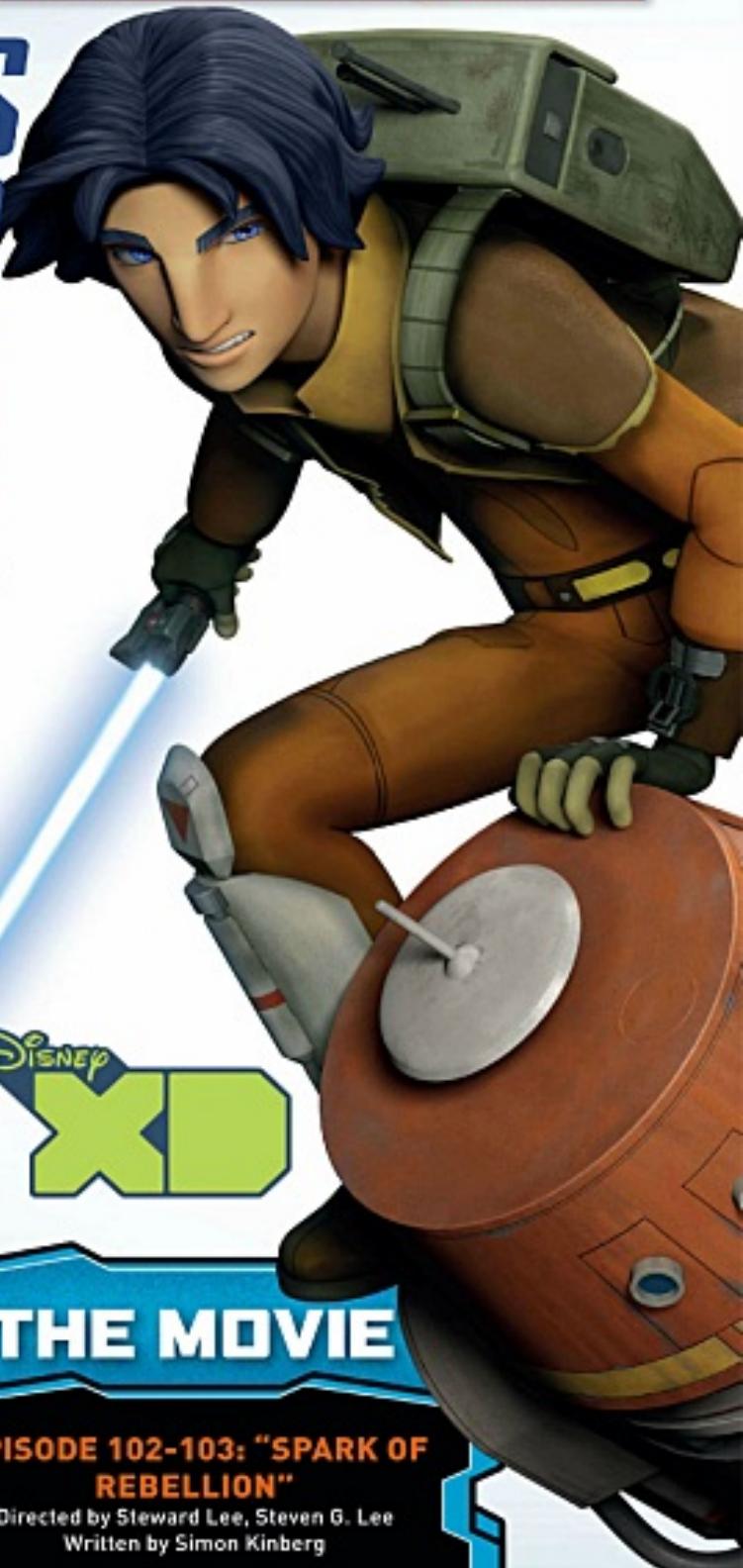
Directed by Dave Filoni
Written by Simon Kinberg



THE MOVIE

EPISODE 102-103: "SPARK OF REBELLION"

Directed by Steward Lee, Steven G. Lee
Written by Simon Kinberg



FIRST EPISODE VII SHIP REVEALED!

As part of the hugely successful Force for Change campaign, J.J. Abrams has revealed the first new X-wing starfighter that will feature in Episode VII. Perhaps the winner of the contest will get to see the ship first-hand?



Don't forget to check out the next issue of *Star Wars Insider* for more news on *Star Wars Rebels*!

THE SERIES

EPISODE 104: "DROIDS IN DISTRESS"

Directed by Steward Lee
Written by Greg Weisman

EPISODE 105: "FIGHTER FLIGHT"

Directed by Steven G. Lee
Written by Kevin Hopps

EPISODE 106: "RISE OF THE OLD MASTERS"

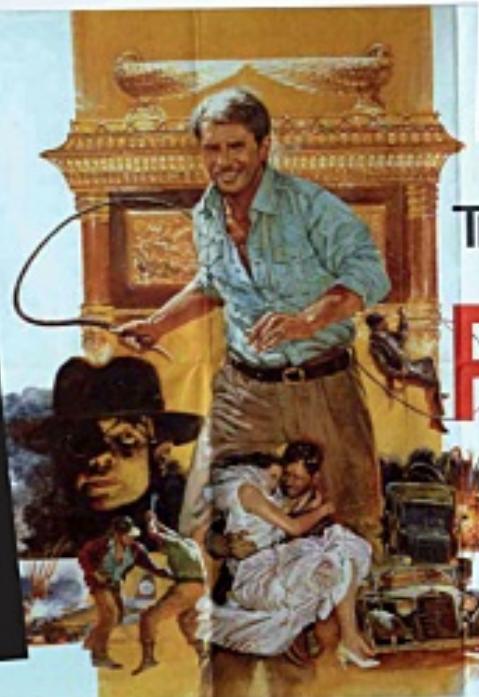
Directed by Steward Lee
Written by Henry Gilroy



STAR WARS AND INDY— AGAIN AND AGAIN!

A special survey for Sky Store Buy and Keep has revealed that movie lovers have re-watched their favorite film an average of 29 times in their lifetime. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* topped the list of our most regularly re-watched films, followed by *Star Wars*! The study revealed 72 percent of viewers enjoy revisiting their favorite films, with 63 percent noticing new things with each viewing. Another 48 percent say re-watching movies makes them happy, while 29 percent re-watch favorite movies to introduce a loved one to them.

1. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK
2. STAR WARS
3. BACK TO THE FUTURE
4. HOME ALONE
5. E.T. THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL
6. JAWS
7. JURASSIC PARK
8. INDEPENDENCE DAY
9. TITANIC
10. ALIEN



THRILL-A-MINUTE STUFF...
DAILY MIRROR

RAIDERS of the Lost Ark

RICHARD LEPARMENTIER MEMORIAL

Special report by Mark Newbold

On June 21 at Soho House on Greek Street in London, friends, family, colleagues, and members of the 501st gathered just over a year after his passing to celebrate the life of Richard [christened Edgar, but better known as Rick or Ricky] LeParmentier who played Admiral Motti.

His son, Tyrone, daughters Rhiannon and Sarah, and his extended family shared stories about Richard, from his early years through his film and writing career and his life travelling the world attending conventions across the globe.



Richard LeParmentier in his best-loved role as Admiral Motti.

The UK Garrison was in attendance as two TIEs stood stoically while Richard's ex-wife, Cheryl, and her husband, Mark, oversaw the proceedings.

Fellow *A New Hope* actor Paul Blake was present and



Actor Jerome Blake pays his respects to his old friend.

messages were read out from Jeremy Bulloch and Garrick Hagon among others. Richard's fellow Rat Pack member Jerome Blake gave an emotional reading for his old friend and all present raised

a glass in Richard's memory.

It was a fitting way to remember the man who helped introduce the power of the Force, solidifying the menace of Darth Vader, and who took the Admiral across the globe.

LAUNCH PAD



MARVEL STAR WARS ENTERS SECOND MARVEL AGE!

MARVEL HAS ANNOUNCED THREE NEW STAR WARS COMICS HELMED BY ALL-STAR CREATIVE TEAMS!

Star Wars: An ongoing series by Jason Aaron and John Cassaday (coming January 2015). Star Wars: Darth Vader, an ongoing series by Kieron Gillen and Salvador Larroca (coming February 2015). Star Wars: Princess Leia, a five-issue miniseries by Mark Waid and Terry Dodson (coming March 2015).

Each book will pick up where *Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope* left off, filling in important, previously unexplored gaps for some of the saga's most iconic characters.





HER UNIVERSE

The queen of Star Wars couture and founder of Her Universe, Ashley Eckstein, introduces her new jewelry line in our exclusive interview! Words: James Burns

We caught up with Ashley Eckstein, the voice of Ahsoka Tano from *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, and the woman behind Her Universe to ask her about the new R2-D2 "My Hero Collection" jewelry line and why she chose the little astromech as the first character in this new line.

"The reason why we started with Artoo-Detoo is because he's my favorite character and I've always referred to him as my hero of *Star Wars*. If you think about it, he's always there to save the day, even in *The Clone Wars* he was saving us a lot! The collection was designed at the Sparkle Factory, owned by Tarina Tarantino. The pieces have been designed to be collectible, quality designer items that would stand the test of time, last for years and be cherished by whoever owned them. The price was very important to me and while we're aware that inferior quality

pieces are available at cheaper price points, we worked hard to keep these under \$100. They range from \$38 to \$85, but, more importantly these have been made to last.

"My favorite pieces are the pearl necklace and the pearl cuff bracelet. Artoo-Detoo is a classy droid and I felt that he deserved a higher end collection. I've paired these pieces with a cocktail dress, and a casual skirt with a collared shirt and they can be dressed up or down. They're versatile pieces that you can wear with anything."

"I'm excited that Her Universe is branching out further into the fashion world. We truly listen to fans and what they're asking for. Feedback is very important and we welcome it. Fans have been asking for more dresses, skirts, cardigans, fashion items and they're all coming! It takes time to make changes or make something new happen—it probably takes a year before you'll see these changes come through!"



WEAR WARS!

Ashley and the Her Universe team has very kindly given us a few pieces from the R2-D2 "My Hero Collection" jewelry collection to give away including the Royal Mod Ring, My Hero Ring, one pair of R2-D2 Royal Post Earrings and one pair of R2-D2 Star Drop Earrings.

To win this amazing set, write to the address on page 3 by October 21 using the subject line "Bleep Bloop!" Visit www.heruniverse.com to see more of Her Universe's amazing fashion line!



C-3PO'S COMMUNICATION STATION!

WELCOME TO STAR WARS INSIDER'S LETTERS PAGE! WRITE IN WITH AN ENTERTAINING LETTER, AND, IF WE PRINT IT, WE'LL SEND YOU A FANTASTIC SIGNED STAR WARS PHOTO FROM OUR FRIENDS AT OFFICIAL PIX!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

This is an account of one Star Wars fan's average day. I'd love to hear about other readers' Star Wars days!

I awake to my alarm, which plays John Williams' Throne Room music from *A New Hope*. I get out of bed wearing my Darth Vader helmet pajamas and get in the shower. After my shower, I put on my Imperial insignia robe. As I get dressed, I pick out one of my many Star Wars shirts for the day. Some favorites for going to work are my polo shirts, either one bearing a mythosaur skull or the Rebel Alliance symbol. If I'm not wearing one of those, I'll pick one of my Star Wars T-shirts, which are too numerous to list.

While drinking a cup of coffee, I'll catch up on Brian Wood's Star Wars comic books, *The Star Wars comic books* by J. W. Rinzler, or *Star Wars Insider*. When it's time to leave for work, I'll usually hop on my bicycle, which has a "Jedi Academy Alumni" decal across the frame, and R2-D2 valve caps. If I have to take the bus, I'll pass the time reading an Expanded Universe novel; I'm currently re-reading the *New Jedi Order* series.

Once at work, I step into my office. There's an AT-AT clock on the wall, next to my *A New Hope* poster. As I complete various tasks, I'll check them off of my list in my notebook, the cover of which shows Darth Vader's helmet in the stars, from the old *Empire Strikes Back* soundtrack cover. I do this all while listening either to Rebel Force Radio or Full of Sith podcasts. As time permits, I'll stop to check for any news on starwars.com and any new postings on the 501st forum. Occasionally, I'll miss calls on my cellphone, which has been named and programmed as IG-88, and has his image as the wallpaper. If that happens, the caller will hear Obi-Wan Kenobi reminding them that the Force will be with them, always.



When my workday is done, I head home and cook dinner, using my stormtrooper spatula, if need be. After walking my dog and catching up with my wife, I'll unwind by re-watching *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*—and am very much looking forward to having *Star Wars Rebels* to watch as well.

Most days I feel like I could take on the whole Empire myself. In short, an average day for this Star Wars fan is pretty good, and there's a good reason for that!

Wes Middleton, by email

Wow! We're wondering if you dream of Star Wars as well?



Above: What's next for our rebel heroes?

Above, left: A stormtrooper spatula, a crucial part of Wes's Star Wars day!

LOOKING FORWARD!

I thought I'd throw in my two cents regarding the decision by the Lucasfilm Story Group to "wipe the slate clean" regarding the Expanded Universe. In short, I'm all for it.

Don't get me wrong; I'm a huge fan of the Expanded Universe. In a time when we only had the original trilogy on VHS, I was starving for new Star Wars content. The *Thrawn* trilogy was a godsend, providing

a new adventure with Luke, Han, and Leia. However, back during the early 1990s, I never assumed that the books and comics were absolute canon. Even when the prequels came out, there were things that were established in the EU that clearly didn't quite line up. For example, in the *Thrawn* trilogy, the timeline of the *Clone Wars* is off by at least a decade. Palpatine is referred to as the "President of the Republic" rather than Supreme Chancellor. Granted, these are minor quibbles, but the prequels already began a process that required "reconning" of established history and continuity. Chancellor Palpatine claims the Republic has stood for 1,000 years, which is at odds with the comics and videogames stating the Republic is at least 24,000 years older than Palpatine's reckoning. And what was that about, "Once more the Sith will rule the galaxy?" I want to read that story!

As *Star Wars Episode VII* is set around 35 years after *Return of the Jedi*, that puts it squarely in the EU Timeline between the *New Jedi Order* and *Legacy of the Force* novel series. That's a lot of history to explain to an audience that hasn't been following the books for 25 years! Having Lucasfilm "wipe the slate" will allow them to get into the new EU without having to catch up with the novels and comics. It also allows J.J. Abrams to make a film [based on George Lucas's story outline] without restricting creativity. And this is the first time since 1983 there is a *Star Wars* film coming and we don't know the fates of our characters!

Thomas Berry, by email

We can't wait to see what the future holds...

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STAR WARS REBELS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GREG WEISMAN DISCUSSES THE CHARACTERS AND CHALLENGES OF THE ALL-NEW SHOW. INTERVIEW: AMY RATCLIFFE

Star Wars Insider: How did you get involved with *Rebels*?

Greg Weisman: I had a lot of job interviews for it—obviously, it's a big deal and everyone at Lucasfilm and Disney cares passionately about the project, so they wanted to make sure they had the right person for the job. There were a lot of people to talk to, and I guess I said enough of the right things that I got the job.

The show is set in-between Episodes III and IV. Was it scary to dive into a timeline that's virtually untouched?

When they told me what era we were working in, they couldn't have picked one that would have interested me more. They really couldn't have. I'm a huge fan of *Star Wars*, but in particular Episodes IV and V. So, that period between III and IV which is largely unexplored—at least in canon—was like being given a gift. We have the freedom to explore new characters and having the Empire as the villains just seemed perfect for my sensibilities.

Is it tricky to have a set endpoint since we know this eventually leads into Episode IV;

does it make plotting the story even more challenging?

It came up very early on once I joined the team. We had a three-act structure, and by three acts I don't necessarily mean three seasons. In other words, each act could potentially be multiple seasons. Basically, it begins on Lothal with a small group of characters that I think it's safe to describe are gadflies as far as the Empire is concerned.

Without going into any detail on any of those acts, we had this structure that still gave us a tremendous amount of freedom, particularly when you keep in mind that we know what happens in Episode IV with Luke. He's off on Tatooine, and he's not part of the rebellion at first, so what that meant is, we knew we weren't going to be dealing with Luke. That meant we had a lot of freedom to create new characters, new situations, and to build to what happens just before Episode IV.

And those new characters are exciting. Tell us about the heroes of *Rebels*, the crew of the *Ghost*. It seems like a diverse group. Diversity is always important to me in my career, both gender wise and ethnically.

ROUNDER

GREG WEISMAN





and that was something I pushed for when I came on board. The characters were all fundamentally created [by Dave Filoni and Simon Kinberg], but we just tweaked them a little.

We have our cowboy Jedi, Kanan, and his young Padawan, Ezra. He's a natural at using the Force, but had no idea that's what he'd been doing. For at least seven of his 14 years, he's been living on his own. He's very much a street rat. I thought Ezra had probably heard the term "the Force," but had no idea it applied to him in any way, shape, or form. He just thought of himself as having good reflexes, but of course his reflexes border on the supernatural. And that's something Kanan sees very quickly.

We have Hera Syndulla, who's the pilot and the owner of the *Ghost*. Kanan's sort of the field leader, and Hera's role ranges from being the getaway driver to being the commander. She has an ongoing history with Kanan that will start to be explored in John Jackson Miller's book, *A New Dawn*, and will also obviously be explored in the series itself.

We have the Mandalorian Sabine Wren who has her own reasons for hating the Empire, and her own issues. She's a spunky artistic girl—of whom I know many—and she has that kind of edge and that kind of personality. She's a munitions expert on top of everything else, and when she blows something up, she's got to blow it up with style. We talked about that a lot.

And we've got Garazeb Orrelios, or "Zeb" for short. He's a Lasat, one of the last Lasat. He enjoys nothing more than punching stormtroopers in the helmet. It's irresistible to him. He's a big personality, but he's kind of a classic hard shell with a soft gooey center.

Finally, we have Chopper. Dave describes him as a cat, if Artoo is the



family dog. He's not always cooperative and not always where you want him to be. He's ultimately extremely useful, but you've got to convince him it's worth his while.

Then we just were blessed with a stellar voice cast for our five regulars. Those sessions were just a joy to be part of.

You mentioned the *Ghost*. Does the crew jump from place to place in the ship or do they stay near Lothal?

"THE CHALLENGES ARE ALMOST UNSURMOUNTABLE. FOR STARTERS, THE EMPIRE IS HUGE AND GALAXY WIDE."

The first season is mostly focused on Lothal, but I don't want to make it sound like that's the only planet they visit. The *Ghost* is absolutely their home; they've got cabins on board—but there are four cabins and six crew members. So, do the math. There are issues there.

What kind of challenges do they have to face?

The challenges are almost insurmountable. For starters, the Empire's huge and galaxy wide. Here they are on the Outer Rim, where the Empire has fewer resources. But their resources are virtually unlimited in comparison to those of the crew of the *Ghost*. They've got to scrounge for supplies, for fuel, for food. They've got to take paying jobs to earn credits so that they can get fuel and food. What they're doing can sometimes feel like, *Are we really helping? We're harassing the Empire, certainly, and we've managed to survive so far,*



but a) How long can we keep this up and b) Is what we're doing of any real significance? You know, long term, the answer's going to be yes, but in the short term there can be moments in the show where they stop a little thing from happening, but the result of that means more attention to Lothal and more Imperials on their scent. Agent Kallus and the Inquisitor are hunting them. Obviously, long term they are doing good, but it's definitely up for debate at this point.

Much of the galaxy still thinks the Empire is doing a good



Left: The Inquisitor: A challenge for the rebel heroes!

Clockwise from top left: The show features the explosive action that fans expect; Chopper and Hera in action aboard the Ghost; the rebels strike back; Kanan Jarrus ignites his lightsaber; the Ghost takes down pursuing TIE fighters!



job. Do our heroes face threats from civilians who want to turn them in to the Empire?

I think that's definitely true. You don't know who to trust. On an Outer Rim world such as Lothal, the Empire isn't quite as shiny as it is on the Inner Core. The rebels are more likely to find potential allies there than they would in the Core. There, the Empire's way more likely to be viewed as, "Yeah, the Empire's doing a great job. We haven't had a war in a while and no terrorist attacks. Everything's good." The way Lothal's being abused, they're more likely to find sympathetic ears way out there. But that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of people who are profiting from what the Imperials are doing, in all sorts of ways.

Like you said, Lothal is out of the way. What attracts the attention of the Inquisitor and Agent Kallus? Kallus and the Inquisitor have complementary, but different responsibilities. Kallus's job is to root out any hint of rebellion, so the actions that our guys are taking are in fact what bring them to his attention. The Inquisitor's job is not inconsistent with Kallus's, but is

way more specific. He's specifically out to hunt Jedi of one stripe or another. Whether there are any surviving Jedi out there that somehow not only survived Order 66, but survived the intervening years, it's the Inquisitor's job to find them and most likely get rid of them one way or another. It winds up being the actions of our crew that suggest to Kallus that there's Jedi involvement. So, Kallus brings in the Inquisitor, and it goes back to what I was saying earlier. There's a big question among our leads about whether they're not just making the situation worse.

What about Palpatine? Do we see his influence in a direct way? The short answer is yes: Palpatine is

"THE TONE IS VERY MUCH THE TONE OF EPISODES IV AND V, WHICH CAN SHIFT IN A HEARTBEAT FROM COMEDY TO TRAGEDY."



Main image: Two Bantha droids feature in the show!

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Ezra joins in the action; an Imperial Star Destroyer; the Imperials caught in zero gravity!

This page, clockwise from left: The Wookiees defy the Empire; rebels in retreat; Zeb prepares to attack!



absolutely referenced. His presence from a propaganda standpoint is in this series. I don't want to go into too many specifics and spoil things, but he is the Emperor and through most of the galaxy, he's a hero. Obviously not to our guys, but to most of the population, he's not the evil Emperor. He's the good Emperor who saved them from the Clone Wars. They have very positive feelings toward him, so his presence is huge throughout the series.

The rebels have similarities to the characters in *A New Hope*. Were there any concerns about matching Luke, Leia, Han, and company too closely? We don't mind parallels existing as long as we're not on the nose with them. For example, it's easy to look at Kanan and Ezra and think it's Han and Luke, but it's not. For one thing, Luke was a talented kid, but he was a

complete innocent with a life that was borderline boring out on Tatooine, whereas Ezra is anything but innocent. He may not know much about being a Jedi but he sure knows about survival. He had to survive on his own for seven years. And Kanan has aspects that are similar to Han, but he also has aspects that are similar to Obi-Wan. Still, he's not either of those two guys when push comes to shove.

With everybody on the show, the idea is to say, "Well, you think you know these guys, but you really don't." They've got rich backstories, unique personalities, and, what's even more important is that the dynamics between them are so exciting and fun. We get a lot of comedy out of these six and still have a lot of action and drama. The tone is very much the tone of Episodes IV and V, which can shift in a heartbeat from comedy to tragedy. ☺

MORE TO SAY

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HAVE YOU?



MY STAR WARS

A LONG-STANDING *STAR WARS* FAN, VANESSA MARSHALL'S DREAM CAME TRUE WHEN SHE WAS CAST AS HERA SYNDULLA IN *STAR WARS REBELS*. INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN WILKINS

1 When were you first aware of *Star Wars*?

1977. I saw *A New Hope* with my cousins in Boulder, Colorado. It was essentially the first day of the rest of my life! I was hooked from the very first moment, when the Imperial Star Destroyer rumbled across the screen. It was game on from that point forward.

Recently, someone asked me, "What's the best film ever made?" I said, "Well, so far there are six of them!" I think the entire saga is the best story ever told.

2 Who is your favorite character?

Leia! George Lucas gave young women such a fantastic icon to emulate in terms of her confidence, her humor, and her hair! But running a close second is Ahsoka in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. I truly, truly love Ahsoka. I worry about her every day. I hope she's okay. Ashley Eckstein did such a great job! I'm all about Team Ahsoka!

Do you have a favorite *Star Wars* scene?

I have several. In *Revenge of the Sith* when Padmé says, "So this is how liberty dies, with thunderous applause." That gave me chills.

I also love the moment when Anakin asks Palpatine, "Is it possible to learn this power?" and Ian McDiarmid savoring every single syllable replies, "Not... from a Jedi." It's just four simple words, but Ian's delivery made my blood run cold. Brilliant acting! And finally the scene in *The Clone Wars* when Ahsoka leaves Anakin. That moment just killed me. That silent fade to black still makes me cry.



Where did you sign your first *Star Wars* autograph?

I think it may have been at a "May the Fourth Be With You" event this year. We were at the LA Children's Hospital to celebrate. Disney provided these really cool images of Hera with TIE fighters, and the kids lined up for autographs. It was really lovely. Just to watch the kids dance with Artoo-Detoo. They were so happy! Vader and Boba were there too! We all had fun. That was my first official signing.

3 Han Solo or Luke Skywalker?

For swagger? Han! For being a true hero? Luke! I love them both for different reasons. Han makes me laugh, and Luke makes me think. Although, Han is my favorite Black Series action figure!

4 See-Threepio or Artoo-Detoo?

I think Artoo. He's so dear. I have the foot-tall Artoo model. When you say "Dance, Artoo!" the Cantina theme plays. This is what I do with my Friday nights!

5 Darth Vader or Darth Maul?

Darth Vader. Vader's arc is the richest one for me. He scares me to death. When I go to any of the 501st events, and I hear the sound of him breathing nearby, I can barely take it! It's terrifying. But when you know what kind of deep sorrow fuels his agenda, he becomes one of the most complex characters in all entertainment. Even though I fear Vader, I have a fondness for Anakin. It was so satisfying to see him ultimately return to his son. That redemption inspires me. Daily. ☺

1



2



3



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4



COWBOY

FREDDIE PRINZE JR. HAS ENJOYED A CAREER FEATURING APPEARANCES ON TV, STAGE, MOVIES AND, OF COURSE, MANY ROLES VOICE-ACTING. HIS LATEST ROLE IS A JEDI WHO HELPS IGNITE A DISPARATE GROUP AGAINST GALACTIC TYRANNY! INTERVIEW: JONATHAN WILKINS

Star Wars Insider: Can you tell us a bit about Kanan, and how you got the part?

Freddie Prinze Jr.: Kanan is a Jedi, but his level or type of Jedi is something you get to discover over the course of the season. If you know the history of Star Wars—as to what exactly this guy has gone through leading up to the time when our show takes place—then you can kind of read into what I'm saying and make your own conclusions....

This project was something that was top secret at Disney. I went in to read for a show called "The Wolf," and if you know the creator Dave Filoni, then it has significance [Dave Filoni is a huge fan of wolves.—Ed]. I went in and I looked at some of the character design, and I was thinking, Wow, these guys are either gonna get sued by ILM, or this is Star Wars!

The dialogue they gave me felt like a Star Wars knock-off: It wasn't "lightsaber," it was a "sun sword." I was saying things like, "I'll help you get your own sun sword." It was way too corny! Then I saw Dave Filoni, behind the glass in the studio; even though he wasn't wearing his famous cowboy hat, I recognized his beard! I've seen his beard all over the Internet! So I asked just straight up, "Is this Star Wars?" They

all started laughing, and I knew what I was in for and I read, and they gave me a couple notes on the second scene.

About a week later I got the part and we got started. It wasn't until the day we started that I really learned who Kanan is, what his history is, what his motivation is, and what his secrets



are because it was an audition process. I'm not Harrison Ford; they're not coming up to me and going, "Please you've gotta be in this movie!" We both have scars on our chin, but that's it!

"IT WASN'T UNTIL THE DAY I STARTED THAT I REALLY LEARNED WHO KANAN IS... AND WHAT HIS SECRETS ARE."

Are you a Star Wars fan?

I learned how to read by reading comic books. The first book I ever read was *Ender's Game*.

I was able to see Star Wars on cable when I was a kid. I had to push three buttons at the same time, and it would bring up this movie channel, and I watched Star Wars with no sound. That was the

only way I could see it! It was like cheating the system, because we didn't pay for that channel. So the first time I saw the movie was on mute and when Vader came on, I thought he was bad-ass. He wasn't so scary because there was no music. It was like a horror movie without music.

FREDDIE PRINZE JR. IS KANAN JARRUS

JEDI



I finally got to see it at my rich friend's house on Betamax—which was a tape that existed before VHS, which existed before Laserdisc, which existed before DVD, which existed before Blu-ray, which existed before streaming! That's the history of technology for people 12-years-old or younger! I got to see it with full sound, and full sound effects with the lightsabers and Luke Skywalker screaming at everyone and I was hooked!

The scar on my chin is from playing Star Wars; my cousin was Darth Vader, and I was Luke Skywalker, we bent this little flagpole back and forth until it snapped in two, because that's an intelligent thing to do! And they both had these sharp points. I slid down this slide to get away from Vader, but the flagpole hit the ground before I did and the sharp end of the flagpole sunk right in my face. A big chunk of my chin flew out, my mum flipped out, and took me to the doctor who stitched me up. I still have that scar to this day and it's George Lucas's fault!

So when you're playing the part of Kanan on the show, are you tempted to do the lightsaber noise in the studio?

Yeah, but I'm not the only one guilty of that! I think everybody in the room has



"EVERYONE IN THE RECORDING BOOTH HAS DONE THE LIGHTSABER OR BLASTER NOISE AT SOME POINT!"



done the lightsaber or blaster noise at some point! The cool thing about Star Wars is, no matter how old you are, it really encourages you to embrace the Cowboys- and- Indians side of things. You can embrace the false reality you're in until the point where it's no longer false, you can genuinely believe that you exist there; the original Star Wars was so great at that.

An easy example is, in most high action, high drama stuff they're cracking jokes like the stakes are still at level 10. You still believe that they believe that they could die at any second, but you still get those lines such as, "Don't get cocky, kid!" or "He's the brains, sweetheart." That's what makes those scenes so great!

Star Wars knows when you need levity, but it knows that levity shouldn't be your entire movie! That's where other people sort of fumble the ball. And that's why this movie from the '70s is still more impactful than I think every other movie made.

Star Wars always has a moral message. As a dad, is that important to you? It is. I grew up on kung fu and samurai movies and that's always the closest connection I could make to Star Wars. The samurai are the Jedi and the ninja are the Sith, willing to make sacrifices to get to the goal quicker where the Jedi don't.



As far as morals and sharing it with my kids, my daughter loves Darth Vader! She thinks he's awesome! He has the worst morality ever in the first part! The first time she saw him was in the Disney parade. He's this huge guy walking down with all these fairies and pixies and all this other stuff around him, and she asked, "Dad, who's that?" I said, "That's Lord Vader." And she said, "Who's Lord Vader?" I said, "He's a Sith Lord." She goes, "What's a Sith Lord?" I go, "Baby girl, he's the bad guy." She goes, "Well, can he do whatever he wants?" Right there was the moment where all parents have to stop and take the opportunity to be a good parent and explain it. I went the bad parent route and said, "No! He cannot do whatever he wants. He answers to the Emperor." And she said, "Who is the Emperor?" And all I had was, "I am!"

What are the challenges of voice-acting?

Being on film and being behind a mic are very different beasts. When you act on camera, you have your eyes, you have your posture, you have the way you hold your body toward someone, whether you're open to what they're saying, or you're rejecting what they're saying. With voice-acting, you have one tool and that's it.

You have to find a way to make that one tool kind of bleed into all the others. It's a very different process. When I first started doing voice-acting between movies on little animated films, it was



never anything I took as seriously as I should have. Now that I have kids, I don't leave Los Angeles, so I don't really act that much. I kind of semi-retired and said I'll give this a little more effort and energy, because I can sometimes record at my house. But when I first went after it, man, I sucked. I was terrible at it. I was either trying too hard, or there was just no energy behind it.

It wasn't until I did a videogame called *Mass Effect 3* that I really worked with a voice director who kind of clicked with me and spoke my language. That's when I really started to feel I was getting my niche, and I started to get a little better. It got to the point where, all of a sudden, I wasn't semi-retired anymore, because I had full-time voice-acting jobs, which is still like the greatest job ever because I don't have to wear makeup and I don't have people fussing with my clothes after every single take. I get to work with a lot of people I love and respect.

I've gotten a lot better at this just from the beginning of this season of *Star Wars Rebels* to now, thanks to some of the voice actors I've worked with. Steve Blum, who plays Zeb, has done every anime and game that's ever been worth a damn in the last 15 to 20 years. Getting to work with a guy that level, it's like when I got to work with the late, great Peter Falk. It's like voice-

acting 101, like Peter Falk was film acting 101. So you steal whatever you can steal, you make it your own, and you ask Dave Filoni if you can rerecord previous episodes because you know you're better than you used to be!

Do you hope to be voicing any more characters on the show? If they let me, if I did it, I don't think it's anything somebody should know. I think they should have to listen and figure it out, so hopefully they wouldn't credit it. We've had

a couple guys come in playing alien arms dealers. I have a voice that's in that world. I feel like I could do one of those.

We had a guy come in who was playing three characters, all in one scene. This guy gets it done! He was a Brit and he used his English accent. Most *Star Wars* villains are English. He was playing three different British accents in one take on one microphone. He's arguing with himself and the third voice is interrupting the argument. And he did it on the first take!

"ACTING WITH STEVE BLUM (ZEB) IS LIKE VOICE-ACTING 101!"

Are you going to collect the assorted Kanan merchandise?

You know, I've never been a collector really, especially of myself. I collected comic books when I was in my early 20s and started making good money, but Nicolas Cage destroyed the comic book market by spending like three times what a #1 Thor was actually worth. If you're reading this, Nicolas Cage, it's your fault the comics are in the rough shape they're in!

I think there was like a *Wing Commander* toy out there and some guy asked me to sign it and I was like, "Are you sure?" I think that was voted the third worst science-fiction movie ever made!

Toys weren't as big for me as books were—I was a big comic book reader, I was a big science-fiction book reader. If it took place in outer space, I read it. So that was always where my head was at, especially in high school.

Have you been aware of the fan reaction to the show?

I'm not that connected with the outside universe. I don't have a Twitter account or a Facebook or Instagram or any of those. I'm not anti-them, it's just not my thing. I'm not big on social relevance. I never have been.

I hope people dig what I do. We were recording a session just last week and we watched this video of someone reacting to the debut of our trailer. So I got to see a genuine, honest response. This guy just went bananas! When the Jedi comes up on screen with the lightsaber, the kids were excited. That was probably due more to the lightsaber than it was to my character, but I hope people are excited!

If *Star Wars* fans don't know about me, just know that I am a tremendous fan of the franchise, from the videogames they made to the movies, to *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. I've always been a fan. ☺





A TRIP TO THE LIGHT SIDE

LIGHTING & VFX SUPERVISOR JOEL ARON'S GROUNDBREAKING WORK ON *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS* ENSURED IT WAS ALWAYS THE BEST-LOOKING SHOW ON TV. NOW HE'S BACK AT WORK ON *STAR WARS REBELS*, GOING TO EXTRAORDINARY LENGTHS TO MAKE THE SHOW LOOK GREAT! INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN WILKINS



Opposite page, from top: The "Fives" and the "Yoda" arcs that proved to be the final episodes of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* that Aron would work on.

Left: *Star Wars Rebels* retains the stunning look that made *The Clone Wars* stand out.

Below: Lighting & VFX supervisor, Joel Aron.

Star Wars Insider What was the last work you did on *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*?

Joel Aron: The very last thing I did on *The Clone Wars* was with Sean Wells, our colorist, working on the final episodes for color grade. We pushed it a little further than we ever did as we were working on the "Fives" arc last. The very last episode we did was episode 521, which was the final episode of the "Yoda" arc. Sean and I took our time with it, just to make it right.

We didn't get a chance to wrap up the *Clone Wars* at the Big Rock animation facility; we had to wrap it up here at LDAC where Industrial Light & Magic is. It just didn't feel the same. We didn't get that solid sense of closure that we usually get with each episode. It was just a lonely departure, just me and Sean. Obviously, it still had to go through final sound, but it felt like we'd put

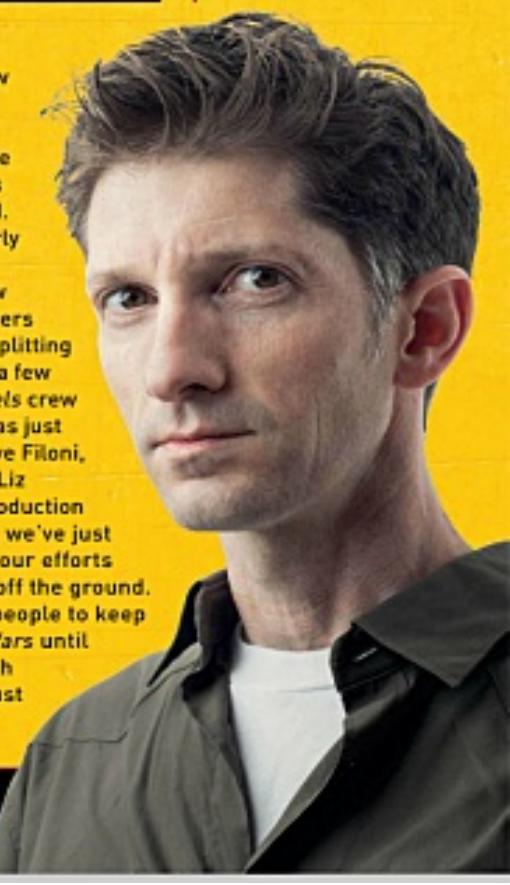
the baby in the basket and pushed it down the river. There was no fanfare; it really didn't all come together for me until we watched it on Netflix. It was really like, Wow, it is done.

We'd always assumed that we were just going to keep doing this show for George and he would screen it in his backyard for everybody, and everyone would be happy! David Meyers, who was the storyboard artist, did the final shot. It's a slow little drift up and ends on a low-resolution flower hanging on a tree. It's not the most beautiful flower; it's not the most beautiful tree; it's not the most well-illustrated object, but it was a very poetic way to end the series.

Was the changeover from *Clone Wars* to *Star Wars Rebels* a smooth transition?

We started production on *Star Wars Rebels* really quietly. Once we knew

that the *Clone Wars* was ending, we knew we had to start something else. So, secretly, people were brought on to *Rebels* as they were needed. I was brought on early in the design phase right after they knew what kind of characters they needed. I was splitting time a little bit, and a few of us were. The *Rebels* crew was very small. It was just a few designers, Dave Filoni, Athena Portillo and Liz Marshall and our production people. From there, we've just slowly transitioned our efforts into getting *Rebels* off the ground. We found ways for people to keep busy on the *Clone Wars* until we were pretty much done and then we just transitioned.





It was kind of bittersweet, every once in a while, as we started to do more and more *Rebels* work, to have to go back and do *Clone Wars* postproduction work, like the color grade and final sound. It felt like an old friend. I really miss the *Clone Wars*.

How does *Rebels* differ from the *Clone Wars*, from your point of view?

It's a lot of weight on my shoulders. Dave Filoni put a lot of trust in it as he did with the *Clone Wars*. Everyone's operating within their little section of the production. On *Rebels*, we're a much smaller crew and we have to follow a desired look. With Kilian Plunkett as art director and me as lighting supervisor, we targeted the Ralph McQuarrie look. Going on to *Rebels*, I had to do something a little bit different. On the *Clone Wars*, I was always looking at anything movie-related that I loved, but always keeping that kind

"WITH STAR WARS REBELS WE NEEDED A RALPH MACQUARRIE LOOK."

of Frank Miller-style hard-contrast with the look. But with this, we needed a Ralph McQuarrie look.

What I did in the very beginning was I took a very well-known painting that Ralph McQuarrie did of Boba Fett and the bounty hunters and rotoscoped each character out in Photoshop. I looked at each character against black. I looked to see how rim light was used, how fill light

was used, how silhouette shape was used and how shadow was used. From there, I had to steer away from the *Clone Wars* setup for how our characters are rendered and lit. I developed a material or a shader for our characters that would give them a Hayao Miyazaki-style flat look and still be able to light them like CG and still have that kind of look we had on the *Clone Wars*. We didn't want to stray too far from the *Clone Wars* because we were really comfortable with how fast we could move the show.

We didn't want to introduce anything heavy, so we had to keep it light. That's why the characters have the same vibe as the *Clone Wars* looks-wise, but with a more McQuarrie-esque paint job and McQuarrie lighting. That was really the biggest challenge and the biggest transition: taking the lighting that we'd done in the *Clone Wars* and adapting it to a Ralph



Above: The roto-scaped bounty hunters, as drawn by Ralph McQuarrie, that became a key ingredient to establishing the look of *Star Wars Rebels*.

Opposite page, from top left: The distinctive lighting effects aboard the Ghost hearken back to the original trilogy; Zeb, another link to Ralph McQuarrie's original production paintings.

Right: Ezra in action. Note the beautiful lighting both on him and the street behind.

McQuarrie look. I also came up with a bunch of ways on the show to reflect back to the original *Star Wars* movie and the original McQuarrie art.

It starts with Kilian and the design team doing all the designs that feature that Ralph McQuarrie look and continues all that through into lighting. Working closely with them, we found ways to get the background paintings to look authentic and to make the sets feel like they have drawn lines with pencil lines. If you look at our textures, you'll actually see what appear to be pencil lines. Even when you zoom up close you'll see what looks like a pencil scratch.

Probably the most challenging element of all is that Disney wants to see things light and bright—*Rebels* airs on the Disney XD. I can get the studio to light it the way I need to, but then in post we go ahead and lift everything up to make it brighter, to add contrast. That's really been the biggest transition change for us: Doing a lot of the final look in post. One of those things is adding film grain onto the show. It's something that not a lot of episodic television shows are doing; it gives the show a good look.

Can you talk a bit about the process of adding film grain?

I really wanted to study the effects of how film grain reacts with the Kodak-made film stock. That was the film stock that was originally used to shoot *A New Hope*. When *A New Hope* was shot, they were thinking, We're going to have a lot of effects on this. Let's shoot it with the effects film stock. That's why the movie tends to look a bit green over time; it just has this look that's a bit off. I studied that grain structure and did a few tests, and showed Dave Filoni what a *Clone Wars* shot would look like with this film grain. This is what I call "edge dithering," which is a common thing used in feature films. Having come from feature films, it's something that I'm always sensitive to.

When you put a CG object over a live-action plate, usually the CG doesn't have grain, but the background plate does and so you add grain to that CG render. When you do that, the CG has a razor sharp edge and so what I noticed when I cut up the Ralph McQuarrie painting was that Ralph painted in such a way that the colors blended together. You never have a razor sharp edge.



there's always this little bit of break-up. So I came up with this really cheap, low budget way to do that edge blend, but on the entire image, which was all digital.

I found a way to do what they all an "edge detection sobel," where I can find all the high contrast edges of everything in an image and then I apply dithering just to that area to break up the edges just a touch. I have the studio do that, so if you look at our un-color corrected images, you'll see on almost every single edge there's a little bit of fizzle, like little marching ants around the edges. That gives us our break-up that makes the characters fall into the plate a little bit better.

When we're in our final color grade, I've figured out the color structure that the grain does, which pollutes the shadow values with a little bit of green and then on the high end it puts a little bit of yellow and red, like you see if you were to watch an original print of Star Wars. Then we apply that grain on top of the fully rendered image that has that edge-dithering effect and so you get what appears like an old Miyazaki film. Now there's film grain on it; it looks like it's been filmed.

"OUR LIGHTSABERS ARE A LITTLE BIT THINNER, THEY'RE SHAPED MORE LIKE RALPH MCQUARRIE LIGHTSABERS."

How else did you link the show to the original Star Wars trilogy?

Sometimes I'll spend a long time researching! A classic example of that is the lightsabers on the show.

I just kept going back to when Obi-Wan hands Luke the lightsaber for the first time and Luke turns it on. It's the first time you've ever seen a lightsaber, and there's something about the way it moved, the way it wiggled, the way it crackled with sound. Everything about it made it feel real. In later films, it turned into what felt like a long light bulb and it just glowed. It didn't do anything, it just illuminated.

I did a lot of research and then [The Making of Star Wars book author] J.W. Rinzler heard me talking about the lightsaber because I was trying to find old footage of it. He said I should talk to [original Lightsaber creator and set decorator] Roger Christian about it.



Roger got Ben Burtt involved and they both told me how it was done. Then I found all this archival footage of early lightsaber tests. Using all this data, I was able to construct a CG version of the original lightsaber.

Basically, in CG, I just did the simplest thing: I built a dowel that was like a long, skinny tube. I then mounted it on a base plate, and I spun the plate. I used Kanan's lightsaber as a test and I spun the disk, and I created a material on the long dowel

shape that did exactly what the original did, which was it reacted to the light in a way that caused it to glow erratically from the spinning dowel.

Our lightsabers are a little bit thinner, they're shaped like more McQuarrie lightsabers—that's our lightsaber.

Rebels is full of all these little tiny stories of how we used simple ways of doing things that were exactly how they did it in the 1970s. I'm still waiting to see how people receive the lightsabers.



I matched the wiggle frequency to the same frequency that Obi-Wan's lightsaber had. Remember when Obi-Wan cut the guy's arm off and there's this one shot that's just a close-up of him, and the lightsaber is next to his face flickering back and forth? I tried to match that kind of

flicker rate and for the longest time I just had that and then my render up. It took me weeks to nail this—but now we've got it set up, it renders itself so the artist doesn't even need to worry. They just turn on the lightsaber and it works like I developed it. It's one of my favorite things about the show so far! ☺

Opposite page, from top: Agent Kallus and his squad of stormtroopers; the Ghost makes the jump to hyperspace!

Left from top: The original lightsaber before the effect was added; the first glimpse of the lightsaber in *A New Hope* (1977) influenced Aron to return to a distinctive, deadlier version of the ancient Jedi weapon in *Rebels*; Kanon brandishes his lightsaber in *Rebels* built by Aron, with help from original creators Roger Christian and Ben Burtt.

MORE TO SAY

Take a look Joel's fantastic photography at www.joelaronphotography.com

HAVE YOU?

THE REBEL



BRUISER

STAR WARS REBELS RESIDENT TOUGH GUY
IS VOICED BY VOICE-OVER VETERAN STEVE BLUM.
INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN WILKINS



Star Wars Insider: Tell us about Zeb? How was the character pitched to you?

Steve Blum: Pitched? Wow! I was lucky to even get to read for him! I believe I originally auditioned for him from home [his name was different at the time] and the project was under a code name, so I honestly had no idea what I was reading for.

At the callback, the executive producers, Dave Filoni and Greg Weisman, gave me a lot more information. The context finally revealed that it was a *Star Wars* project—at which time I may have begun the process of the internal squee—which has not subsided and may actually be getting more intense! The guys told me Zeb was a large, powerful soldier, an alien species new to the *Star Wars* universe. His people had been horribly wronged by the Empire, so he's highly motivated to help the rebellion in any way he can. He possesses martial arts-type fighting skills, prehensile feet, and an amazing weapon. Zeb has a bit of a chip on his shoulder; he's also intensely loyal, but has a devious sense of humor that fully displays when clobbering stormtroopers ("Bashing bucketheads"—his favorite hobby, incidentally) or when bantering with Chopper.

How did you find Zeb's voice?

We played! We tried a bunch of different accents, pitches, vocal affectations, and ultimately landed on sort of a laid-back British, semi-cockney, maybe a little Australian, deep timbered rasp. It seemed to fit his character design perfectly.

Were you given much back-story? Did you create any?

They gave me just enough at the time to flesh him out. The back-story really started unfolding at the first recording session. I honestly still know very little about his past. I like that. The whole thing has been so ultra top secret, that it's probably best for everybody if we don't know too much. I'm imagining some back-story, but this isn't mine, so I trust the writers to work their magic.



"SINCE WE HAVE THE TIME,
WE SAVOR EVERY LINE TO
MAKE SURE WE EXTRACT AS
MUCH JUICE AS WE CAN."

Are there similarities
between Zeb and Wolverine
(another character you've played)?

Ha ha! Yes! Definitely in the vocal range, but not in the delivery. Wolverine seems to wear his angst on his sleeve and is not too interested in structure, hierarchy or filters. Zeb seems to be a bit more diplomatic, recognizes rank, and actually enjoys the fight. I play Wolverine as a very reluctant hero. He does what he has to do. I see Zeb as more childlike, especially with his crewmates. The similarity comes with their sense of honor, loyalty, and integrity. I find that balance for both characters fascinating. I think they'd be great buddies—and incredible sparring partners!

You've appeared in a variety of *Star Wars* videogames over the years [see opposite page]. How different is videogame work compared to TV?

The pace, for starters. Often in the gaming world, we see the script for the first time minutes or even seconds before recording. And we record hundreds of lines in a session with multiple characters. I think my record is 23 different characters in one session—16 in a *Star Wars* game. We also work as a cast on series TV shows—with the luxury of reading with other actors. I was raised in the anime VO community—where we work alone in the

booth, so it's a familiar, comfortable and efficient way to record—but being in a room with a cast—especially the *Star Wars Rebels* cast—is so much more fun! Have I mentioned that I love this cast? I love this cast!

There's also much more time for character development and Dave and the gang use every bit of it to flesh out the characters and story, leaving no opportunity missed. Since we have the time, we savor every line to make sure we extract as much juice as we can. Everybody in the room is a fan, so we're all happy to unleash the passion for as long as it takes. I wish we had that much time on the games, too, but there's just too much material to get through.

I must do a quick shout-out to my old friend Darragh O'Farrell, who originally brought me into the *Star Wars* gaming universe and is one of the greatest directors I've ever worked with. It's amazing how much awesome we were able to extract on the games, even with the volume we recorded. Fun fact: I'm approximately 1/3 of all stormtroopers in the games!



STEVE BLUM'S SELECTED STAR WARS CREDITS!

Star Wars: X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter
Star Wars: Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith — Computer, Rebel Officers

Star Wars: Rebellion — Green Group Leader, Pilot 2, Imperial Officer

Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance — Olin Garn, Zero-G Stormtrooper, Civilian Pilot

Star Wars: Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast — Galak Fyyar, Reborn

Star Wars: Force Commander — AT-ST Driver, Hover Tank Driver

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic — additional voices

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords — additional voices

Star Wars: Battlefront II — Male Alliance Infantry

Star Wars: Empire at War — Empire HUD, Stormtrooper, additional voices

Star Wars: Empire at War: Forces of Corruption — Tyber Zann (trailer only), Defiler, TIE interceptor pilot, additional voices

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed — stormtrooper #2

Star Wars: The Old Republic — Andronikos Revel, Baron Deathmark





"WHEN I'M BUILDING A VOICE, I RELY ON THE MODEL OF THE CHARACTER FOR MUCH OF THE NUANCE."

Was Zeb's look what you expected?

They were pretty clear on where they were going with Zeb at the time of the callbacks. I love that his design came from Ralph McQuarrie's Wookiee concept art! It just makes him that much more colorful and awesome for the fandom. When I'm building a voice, I rely on the model of the character for much of the nuance—and all of that was there by the time I saw it.

What's the biggest misconception people have about voice-acting?

Here's a few: That anybody can do it. That it's easy. That if you can do a few funny voices or impressions, you shouldn't have to train for 10 or 20 years learning how to act. It's a business and it's an art form learned best by experience. A lot of folks also think we get rich doing this. A few have, but I, like many in my field, proudly consider myself to be a blue collar, hard-working guy. I study and work at it every day and record at least 30 times more auditions than I actually book for paying gigs. You have to love to do it, and never do it for fame or fortune.

How has the fan reaction to Zeb been so far?

Overwhelming! I already get a lot of fan mail and the show hasn't even aired! Just returned from Star Wars Weekends in Orlando and I'm still recovering from the intense, massive outpouring of love for this show. I'm humbled beyond expression.

Will you be collecting the Zeb merchandise? YES!

Will you be voicing any other characters as the show progresses?

Maybe. If I told you, I'd have to kill you.

What advice would you give to anyone hoping to imitate Zeb's voice?

Summon your inner warrior. Don't be afraid to make funny faces—it helps with the voice! And most importantly, have fun! ☺

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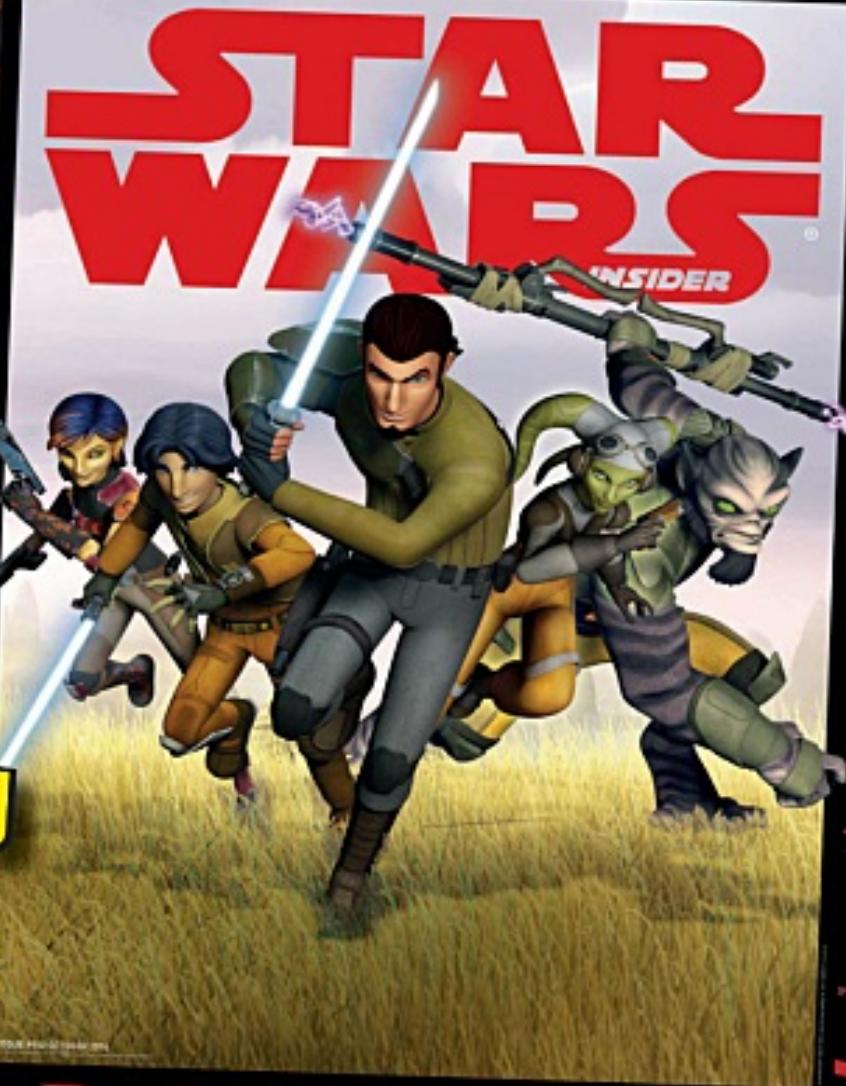
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THE MAKING OF A NEW DAWN

DEL REY BOOKS' NEW ERA OF STORYTELLING BEGINS HERE! *INSIDER* HAS BEEN PRIVILEGED WITH A SPECIAL LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES WITH ART DIRECTOR SCOTT BIEL, ARTIST DOUG WHEATLEY, AND AUTHOR JOHN JACKSON MILLER, WITH AN EXCLUSIVE EXTRACT FROM THE NEW BOOK! INTERVIEWS BY JONATHAN WILKINS AND TRICIA BARR

COVER VERSION

RANDOM HOUSE'S ART DIRECTOR SCOTT BIEL AND ARTIST DOUG WHEATLEY DISCUSS WHAT MAKES A GOOD BOOK COVER GREAT!

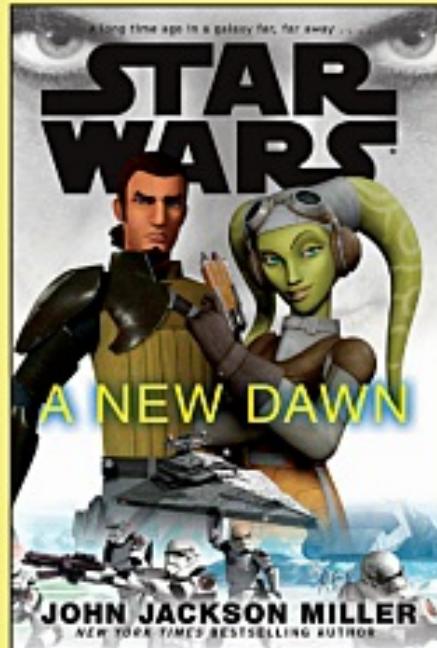
SCOTT BIEL, DESIGNER

Star Wars Insider: Can you talk about what you do and how you came to be doing it?

Scott Biel: I kind of lucked out, because I'm a big nerd at heart! I grew up with Star Wars. It was just happenstance that they were looking for a different style of direction on the Star Wars books, and my creative director thought I'd be interested in working on it. I was really nervous about it. I thought, *I'd love to do it, but it will be tough.*

With everything I do, I just try and come up with the best concept that I can. I find out a little about the book from the editor and the publisher, and then we go back and forth with concepts and ideas about what the cover art should be. From there I'll get the idea of what kind of art—or artist—I'm looking for and then set my feelers out if that artist or group of artists are available.

From there I'll put together a proposal that I send out to Lucasfilm for approval. If it's a yes, we'll do some sketches or roughs to make sure we're going in the right direction, and then we'll start working up the final cover



and putting on the type. That goes back to Lucasfilm for final approval, we'll make any tweaks here and there, and be ready to go!

What was the first book you worked on?
The first book I got to work on was *Heir to the Empire: 25th Anniversary Edition*. That was a big one—so no pressure at all!

We wanted to do something graphic and we thought the logo would fit, so I did some different things with that over some foil. My publishers were really happy with it and we sent it over to Lucasfilm, and they liked it, too, but they had suggestions and adjustments, so we made those.

Do you have particular covers you look back on and think, *That came out a lot better than I thought it would* or *That looks a lot more different from what I expected*?
We do have a couple, definitely. I know *Dawn of the Jedi* was one of those, where we had an idea of what we wanted it to look like, and through coloring, we were able to make it look better than we had originally anticipated.

What was the thinking behind not using the Rebels logo on the cover?
It was from the publishers and Lucasfilm, because it was due to be released before the actual show. We wanted to keep it

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away . . .

STAR WARS®



A NEW DAWN

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JOHN JACKSON MILLER

Foreword by DAVE FILONI

Opposite page:
Scott's mock-up of
the cover, created to
give a rough idea of
the layout.

Left: Doug Wheatley's
stunning art graces the
final cover!

separate from the TV show. It doesn't take place during the TV show, it's set before, showing how these two characters met and their first adventures.

Is it hard to get the right font?

I was taught that you have to flow the font with the art. The main focus of Star Wars—of any book—is the cover art itself and that draws you in as a reader. Once I have an idea what the art is going to be, I start exploring, whether it should be a classic Sans MS font or other ideas, just get a feel for the art. We send a number of options over to Lucasfilm. On *Darth Plagueis*, we were struggling, and we sent some options to Lucasfilm.

Troy Alders [Lucasfilm's in-house art director] suggested we used fonts that appeared in the movies. We tried them out and ended up using them.

What made you settle on that final cover image for *A New Dawn*?

The thing that the publishers here and at Lucasfilm liked about it was that this was a story about Hera and Kanan as primary characters. I think that's why we chose the one we did; we liked them standing back-to-back. It felt like there was good chemistry between them in the particular sketch, too.

We always tell the artists that it's an important book, but this is a really important

book! I didn't say why, but it was important for a number of reasons, primarily because it's our first book with the new canon; it's also important that we're tying into the TV series. So Dave Filoni was involved with the book and the art process, too, which was a real pleasure!

What did Dave advise?

He offered some direction, mainly with the way the characters looked, from the sketch phase to what we ended up having for the final version. It's great to have one of the creators of a property, it's good to get them involved in this, so in that way you're able to fully complement their vision of what they originally intended.



DOUG WHEATLEY, ARTIST

Star Wars Insider: *A New Dawn* is the first in a new line of Star Wars books. Was it a big challenge?

Doug Wheatley: Oh yeah, absolutely. The main challenge was turning the animated characters into real-life images. We're usually dealing with actors or models who have been placed into position in the Star Wars universe, and trying to get that right was the biggest challenge.

Is it an artist's dream to draw stormtroopers?

It's like one of those things where you think, *Alright, I'm going to draw stormtroopers!* That's the first time. And after that you're like, *I hope I never have to draw a stormtrooper again!*

What makes a great Star Wars cover?

What makes a great Star Wars cover is something that reflects the origins of Star Wars, because I think it's what the fans and the public identify the most with,

especially in the case of the older generation. I think the newer generation relate to the newer films. Having that cinematic style on the cover helps to communicate the whole idea of what Star Wars represents.

Were you aware that this was the first of a new line of Star Wars books?

I think Scott was trying to take the pressure off, because I wasn't aware of that. He'd said it was important, but they always say that it's an important book!

Were you tempted to make the characters look like Vanessa Marshall and Freddie Prinze, Jr.?

Well, Freddie wasn't the first guy that came to mind! The biggest challenge is giving these cartoons a real-world likeness. Dave Filoni and Random House were concerned about that.

Dave Filoni's notes were really interesting, because he's living with

these characters right now, and he knows who they are. On this cover, we were just being introduced to them, so it was important to get positive feedback.

Did you enjoy drawing TIE fighters?

Again, it's like one of those double-edged swords: TIE fighters are tough. TIE fighters and X-wings mess with perspective because of their really unique shapes. With TIE fighters you've got two flat squares on either side that mess with you, but, at the same time, once you get them so that they look reasonably right, it's the coolest thing. When you start to put them into space, those squares start to do some wonky things; they kind of cheat perspective in a way.

This is the beginning of the rebellion. TIE fighters and the stormtroopers are the defining moment that show we're entering into that era of the rebellion. I thought, *If we can put TIE fighters on the cover, that pretty much tells everybody: Oh, crap!*

////JOHN JACKSON MILLER, WRITER////

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR OF A NEW DAWN

With the excitement of new movies and the television show *Star Wars Rebels*, every day is like a new adventure for fans. For those who want to dive into the heads of characters or explore the lore, the books provide the perfect avenue. John Jackson Miller's novel debuts in a fresh, exciting era of *Star Wars* storytelling. It is, indeed, *A New Dawn*.

Star Wars Insider: The title *A New Dawn* has symbolic meaning for the story of your novel. The book also ushers in the new dawn of adult prose novels in *Star Wars* canon, which will encompass the movies, television shows such as *Star Wars Rebels*, books, and comics. Compared to your prior *Star Wars* fiction, did you feel any additional pressure kicking off a new era of stories?

John Jackson Miller: I always feel obliged to present *Star Wars* properly and create stories that will resonate with fans, of course. But there was no added pressure in this case because I was well into writing the book before I learned about the position it would hold. The title was chosen at that point, and I redrafted what I'd done to make it feel as much like a starting point as possible.

But then, I try to write like that, anyway. Every *Star Wars* book is someone's first!

In the book's acknowledgments, you thank Rayne Roberts, Leland Chee, and Pablo Hidalgo of the Lucasfilm Story Group. As one of the first participants in the new cooperative storytelling process, how did your interaction with the Story Group work?

We had a brainstorming teleconference, which was very helpful. There were also several rounds of comments on the plot and the manuscript from the Story Group, in addition to the usual feedback from Shelly Shapiro and Random House editors and Lucasfilm's fiction editor, Jennifer Heddle. It was a nice, streamlined process.

A New Dawn is set in the relatively unexplored era between *Revenge of the Sith* and *A New Hope*. How did you extrapolate the state of the galaxy in this pre-rebellion setting?

The early Imperial era is a case of a totalitarian state making massive changes to a huge society over an incredibly short time: That's what happened in Russia during collectivization, so my master's degree in Soviet Studies finally came in handy! *A New Dawn* looks seriously at the logistical challenges facing the early Empire, from transforming industries and co-opting labor guilds to corrupting some of the Republic's existing tools for surveillance. That is the backdrop for our adventures: Kanan starts as a small cog in an enormous and growing machine—and Hera is there to pour sand into it.

Hera and Kanan, two members of the heroic team on *Star Wars Rebels*, are featured in *A New Dawn*. They are vibrant and sharply portrayed on the page, much like Luke, Leia,

and Han came across in the original trilogy. Did you have the opportunity to see any of the episodes or read scripts before writing *A New Dawn*, or did you just receive input from the show's executive producers Dave Filoni, Simon Kinberg, and Greg Weisman?

I started very early in the process, when I had just the story bible and some artwork. I also had feedback on the plot from the three producers, and Filoni was in the brainstorming session. The result is a story that is mine, but which was also partially shaped by the *Star Wars Rebels* team's needs for Kanan and Hera at this earlier point in their lives. We worked to make *A New Dawn* a real and important episode for those characters, while also functioning as a book that stands alone.

Count Vidian is a classic *Star Wars* antagonist. What do you think are the keys to a good *Star Wars* villain and how did that shape Vidian?

The trick with a villain who's also a minion—as is the case with anyone who works for the Emperor—is that the villain has to have a personal story and goals of his or her own, even as they also serve the greater cause. It struck me that many of the players in the early days of the Empire would be people who had power and influence

already in the Republic era, and who had joined the party, so to speak. Vidian is someone who was considered an inspiration in the pre-Empire times: a guy who rose from a debilitating disease that left half his body cybernetic to become a renowned corporate fixer. But now, as the Emperor's "efficiency expert," Vidian

has turned his cold and calculating mind to the evil task of reshaping industry and society. I imagine the Emperor really enjoyed promoting such people.

Beyond the heroes and the villains, the novel has a broad cast of characters. Do you have any favorites?

One of the themes of *A New Dawn* is that the people who tend to rise up first against corrupt governments aren't always people cut out to be ideal players in a resistance movement. I am definitely fond of Skelly, the Clone Wars veteran who objects to the Empire's industrial policies—but Skelly is also a mess, a comical mix of bad impulses and a persecution complex. Then there is Zaluna, who's seen her life's work slowly corrupted by the Empire: she has no intention of rebelling, until she is given no choice. I also really enjoyed writing Captain Sloane, who shows how you have to think to get along in the dog-eat-dog world of the Imperial Navy.

In all, I think *A New Dawn* is the flip-side of my previous novel *Kenobi*: Where that was an immersive experience into life on the periphery, this is a place where the early Empire is very much present. It might not be the happiest place to visit, but it's a fun ride.

Opposite page: Doug Wheatley's character sketches flesh out earlier take on the cover!

Below: Author John Jackson Miller.



"KANAN STARTS AS A SMALL COG IN AN ENORMOUS AND GROWING MACHINE—AND HERA IS THERE TO POUR SAND IN IT."

REBELS UNITED

Sloane wasn't the first Imperial captain Kanan had met. But she was certainly the best looking—even if she did insist on pulling that wonderful black hair back beneath the little hat. One of her aides was shining a light into his face, entirely unnecessary under the light from the moon.

"They say you got into the security zone because you were ferrying miners to work," the woman said. "If you're a bus driver, why were you trying to enter the factory?"

"Heading to pick up my pay." Hands manacled behind his back, Kanan flashed a smile at her. "If you want, once I get it I can show you the town."

Sloane's brown eyes narrowed. "Wait a second. I know you! You're that pilot from the explosives hauler. *The mouth*."

"You've got a name for me," Kanan said, grinning. "That's great. I knew you couldn't just fly off. You came all the way down here to see me?"

Sloane stepped forward, reached around to grab his ponytail, and yanked.

"Let's not be giving me jobs to do, pilot," she said, forcing him to the

"WAIT A SECOND. I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE THE PILOT FROM THE EXPLOSIVES HAULER, *THE MOUTH*!"

ground. "This little act of yours might work with some. Me, I might press you into service and set you to maintaining trash compactors. Or shove you into one!"

"Okay, okay," Kanan shrugged against the stormtroopers' hold. "But if you know I'm a pilot, you know I work here."



FICTION EXTRACT

"With no pass for the grounds?"

"Lal Grallik knows me. Ask her."

"Making friends?" Kanan heard a now-familiar voice from behind Sloane. The captain spun without releasing him, wrenching his neck in the process. Hera stepped forward from the factory, dangling his pass in her hands.

"You left your ID in the plant, buddy."

The Imperials shone their light on Hera. Sloane studied her before looking back to him. Kanan nodded, to the extent he could with the captain holding on to his hair.

"Told you."

Sloane released Kanan with a shove, knocking him backward and down into the mud. She turned on Hera.

"And where's your badge?"

Hera grinned.

"Well, I've got to have it. How could I be in here, otherwise?"

Sloane looked to the sky and growled with frustration. "I've had enough of you people. I think we'll take you all in for—" "Sloane!"

The captain checked her comlink.



"Count Vidian," she said. "We're still running down Skelly—and any accomplices."

"Forget them," Vidian replied.

"My lord?"

"The inspection. Everything. Forget it all. I've seen enough here. I have a new strategy that will serve the Emperor. We need to return to Ultimatum right away. Gather your team and meet me at the shuttle."

Sloane acknowledged the order and deactivated her comlink. She gestured to a stormtrooper to remove Kanan's handcuffs. Another returned his blaster and holster.

Your lucky day," Sloane said.

"It sure is," Kanan said, nodding to Hera. "I've got the two of you here."

Hera rushed forward and grabbed his arm.

"Thank you, Captain. We'll be going." She began pushing Kanan toward the open gate, under Sloane's icy glare. "Sorry to have disturbed you."

"Yeah, good luck with your inspection," Kanan said, before Hera forcibly shoved him out the employee gate.

Hera hustled Kanan around the corner and back to the hoverbus. She seemed perturbed.

"You really don't know when to quit, do you?"

Kanan shrugged.

"Hey, it worked, didn't it?" He wiped the mud off his trousers. "Being hostile or closemouthed just sets them off. The way to get rid of Imperials is to be so happy to see them that they're thrilled when you're gone. Some Imperials, anyway."

Hera put up her hands.

"We don't have time for this. Something horrible happened in there, and—" She paused and looked down, choking up a little. He realized he hadn't seen her looking anything but fully in control before. Now she looked spent.

"Hey," he said, touching her wrist. "You're not kidding. Something bad?"

"Vidian killed the administrator."

"What, Lal?" Kanan was shocked. "He killed her? Why?"

"Because he could," she said, looking up and staring into his eyes. "Her husband saw it and ran off searching for Vidian. And it sounds from that comlink call like Vidian's up to something else!"

"Right about over there," Kanan said, pointing to the Imperial shuttle. Across the muddy boulevard from it, Moonglow's main gate opened. Vidian appeared there, talking with the vessel's flight crew. Sloane and her stormtroopers joined him.

"We've got to follow them," Hera said. "I can't follow a shuttle in a hoverbus!"

"It's a Mark Six Smoothride," she said. "It'll fly!"

"About a zillion years ago," Kanan said. He looked back to see Vidian marching purposefully along the planking toward the shuttle. Sloane lingered at the gate with the others, evidently giving orders related to her departure.

And then, his eye tracing the path back to the Lambda, he saw something wedged beneath the plank nearest the ship. It looked like a small pouch, several meters away from what appeared to be a sewer grating.

An open sewer grating.

Kanan didn't need the Force to tell him to grab Hera.

"Get down!"

The night lit up in Shaketown. The Imperial shuttle exploded, sending blazing debris in all directions. In the street, the shockwave caught Vidian, hurling him bodily into the factory's outer fence even as a fireball blazed overhead.

Kanan caught only a glimpse of the cyborg's fate as, Hera's shoulders in his gloved hands, he dived with her behind the Smoothride. Metallic debris rocketed in all directions, some of it slamming thunderously into the hoverbus. Speeder bikes parked earlier by the reinforcements went spinning wildly; Kanan saw one impale itself in the fencing behind him.

Hera caught her breath as she reached the third-story rooftop. The buildings across the boulevard from Moonglow's headquarters weren't tall, but they all had ladders or some other kind of fire escapes. Everyone knew to expect groundquakes on Gorse. This was another story.

From a concealed spot, she looked down into the street with amazement. The Imperial vessel was still burning below, destroyed by someone they'd hurt. It was something Hera had expected to see one day, something she'd always believed was coming. Just not this soon, and not this way. She wasn't sure what had driven Skelly to do it, but he certainly had been the one responsible, based on what Kanan had seen.

Hera hadn't wanted to linger at ground level after the blast. The street looked like a war zone, and the assassination attempt was sure to send the Imperials over the edge. But she'd helped with the search-and-rescue for as long as she dared, and had to scout the best way out of the security-cordoned neighborhood. Only Kanan had any kind of permission to be on the ground anyway, and he'd hung around down there, trying to free people. She thought well of him that he'd do that. It went very much against the freewheeler mold he seemed to want to fit into.

In truth, she was still reeling from the moment in the factory when Gord Grallik had viewed the recording of Vidian killing his wife. A typical tough security guy, yet he had watched the murder as if his world were crumbling around him. It still wrenches at her heart to remember it.

But that wasn't the worst part, she now realized as she looked down at the street. Vidian, singed but apparently intact, was being hustled from the scene by his escort when Gord appeared at the gate. The Besalisk rushed forward amid the flaming embers only to be stopped by the stormtroopers. She couldn't hear him from this distance, but he was appealing to them, begging them. To arrest Vidian, she supposed. A Moonglow aide handed Gord a datapad: Hera assumed it was the images from the security cam. The frantic Besalisk showed it to one trooper after another, but they would not let him pass.

Hera didn't want to watch—there was nothing at all she could do. Not here, not now. But she made herself. Gord tried to follow Vidian anyway, only to be grabbed by the troopers. It took four of them to restrain the heavy-shouldered security chief: one for each arm.

Then they beat him. This was justice in the Empire.

When the stormtroopers parted, Hera saw Gord crawling back toward Moonglow's gate. She blinked away a tear of anger. Yes,

KANAN DIDN'T NEED THE FORCE TO TELL HIM TO GRAB HERA. "GET DOWN!"

The din subsided. Once he was certain Hera was all right, Kanan drew his blaster and looked cautiously around the vehicle. Up the way, Vidian was on his knees but alive, his reinforced frame evidently having given him some protection. But the street before the factory was a blazing crater—and the block of buildings behind it, including poor Drakka's Diner, was now ablaze. Kanan's instinct was to run toward it, to see if the Besalisk cook was all right.

But something else caught his eye first. A dark figure, scrambling out from the sewer grating he'd seen. The spot was amid the flames but untouched at the moment—and the figure was limping quickly along with a large pack on his back. Skelly!

Finding a functioning Imperial speeder bike, Skelly took one look back. Then he mounted it and was gone.





she needed to see these things, to remind her what she was fighting for.

Hera squinted to see through the smoky darkness where Vidian had gone. She spotted him and Sloane in intense discussion, heading between a line of flanking stormtroopers on the way toward—

No, Kanan's not going to like that.

"Are you kidding me?" Having finished his search and joined Hera on the roof, Kanan stared down at the empty spot on the street. "I can't believe this. They stole the hoverbus!"

"I think they call it commandeering on official business," Hera said, crouching at the roof edge and pointing east. Kanan saw the outline of the hoverbus bobbing far up the lane. "I'm sure they're headed to the Imperial spaceport to get another shuttle."

Kanan frowned.

"Yeah, well, wait until they find the bathroom door's stuck." He flicked wet ashes from his tunic. He'd found Drakka pinned behind his freezer unit; it had taken long minutes to extricate him. Then the cook had stormed out, intent on giving the Imperials a piece of his mind about his destroyed business. Kanan could see from his position that the conversation wasn't going very well, but he had his own problems. "The spaceport's in Highground. How am I supposed to get over there?" It was ten kilometers away.

"I'm more interested in getting out of here," Hera said, rising. "An attempt's been made on an envoy of the Emperor—everyone's a suspect. We've got to get out of this neighborhood before half the Empire shows!" She turned away from the street side of the roof. "Maybe back down those alleys to the south?"

"It's Okadiah's bus," Kanan said. "I can't just forget about it." This was the whole problem with making friends, he did not say: They made it impossible to be truly free.

He looked back across Broken Boulevard—now a more descriptive term

trespass, murder, and sabotage couldn't stop thorilide production, it seemed: Every six minutes another one of the transports departed the plant. "It's headed—"

"—straight to the Imperial spaceport," Hera said. "I caught that on my reconnoiter yesterday."

Their eyes met—and a heartbeat later they were running along the rooftops. Hera was fast as she was lithe, hurdling obstacles and leaping one gap after another. Every so often, she looked back to see if Kanan was keeping up.

"I'm fine," he said, keeping a few steps back. "Just trying not to run into you."

She smiled and leapt the next opening. He followed suit.

Reaching the end of the row of flats, they found a door and scrambled down a staircase. Catching their breaths in the doorway, they stopped in time to see the hovertruck move up the street toward them. A stormtrooper waved the vehicle and its golden chauffeur droid past.

As soon as the stormtrooper turned his head, Kanan and Hera bolted toward the approaching truck. Kanan leapt to the running board of the passenger side.

"I am sorry," the droid said. "Riders are not allowed on the—"

Hera, now hanging outside the other door, flicked a switch on the droid's neck, shutting him off. Kanan scrambled inside the cab, grabbed for the control yoke, and

THEIR EYES MET—AND A
HEARTBEAT LATER THEY
WERE RUNNING ALONG
THE ROOFTOPS.

than usual—and saw a lumbering gray hovertruck departing Moonglow's loading dock. "Hey, wait," he said, grabbing Hera's wrist before she could leave. "I think we can solve both problems at once."

He pointed to the vehicle.

"That's full of refined thorilide." Even



ducked. The vehicle executed a wide left turn past the last stormtrooper checkpoint; the sentry never saw the woman hanging outside. Adroitly, Hera opened the door and bumped the robot out of the way.

"I prefer driving," she said, reaching for the controls. "Nothing against you."

Kanan closed the passenger door and stretched his legs.

"Sweetheart, you can take me anywhere," He glanced back at the mess Shaketown had become. "As long as it's away from here!"

Hera had been scarcely more talkative than the deactivated droid, Kanan thought. She'd said nothing about what had gone on in the plant before she'd found Lal.

He didn't know Lal's husband well, other than that he had a short fuse and a big blaster collection. And something else. "That guy lived for Lal," he said.

"I could tell. It was rough."

Watching her, Kanan thought that must be an understatement. "Well, you found out one thing about Vidian. He's evil in a can."

"Being evil doesn't stop you with the Empire. It helps." She sighed. "I didn't even get near him this time—but I guess I found out what I came to Gorse to learn. The secret to Denetrius Vidian's efficiency is murder."

"And where does that get you?"

"Nowhere I wasn't before." She shook her head. "And all I was able to find about Tharsa was that he'd visited there a few times a long time ago. I couldn't find out

anything else. First Gord showed up, then they all started running around looking for Skelly." Guiding the hovertruck around a corner, she sighed. "I don't know what Skelly thinks he can accomplish this way. This loose-cannon stuff—it doesn't get you anywhere."

"And where are you trying to get?" He looked at her keenly. "I thought you were going to ditch me after you did your little break-in. And you just said your big mission is done. But here you are."

She rolled her eyes. "I'm helping you get your hoverbus back."

"Uh-huh." Kanan chuckled.

"No, no, it's the least I can do," Hera said. "You were willing to come back inside, looking for me. Unnecessary—and nearly trouble for you. But appreciated."

"Well, you're the only person on this planet I'd take that chance for." That should tell her something, he thought.

"I'm not sure I believe that. You went back to help that Besalisk cook—and Okadiah told me back in the bus about you saving him from Vidian." She smiled. "You even saved Skelly at the cantina."

He put up his hands. "Hey, everyone makes mistakes!"

"Well, we'll see," she said, and left it at that. Kanan liked the look he saw from her. It said she'd come to think he was worth keeping an eye on.

Looking out at the buildings whizzing by,

Kanan laughed. "Everything that goes into thorilide—all the security—and here we've just driven off with a truckload."

"We're taking it right where it's supposed to go," she said. "And it's not like we'd find anyone to sell it to."

Kanan shook his head. "You know, I don't even know what the junk is used for."

"Thorilide?" Hera asked. "It's used in granular solid-state shock absorption. They use it on Star Destroyers to keep turbolaser turrets in place after firing."

"Loose cannons again!" Kanan chortled. "They're going to this much trouble for it?"

"They've got a lot of cannons!" Hera's eyes widened as she considered it. "A Star Destroyer requires the use of sixteen million individual components, twenty-seven thousand of which are only produced in a single system, like Gorse." She looked at him, her face animated with passion. "That's why the Emperor needs an Empire, Kanan. It's like a space slug, whose only function is to stay alive. It's got to consume, and consume, and consume."

"You're starting to sound like Skelly."

"He's not all wrong," she said, guiding the hovertruck into Highground. "But he's definitely not all right."

MORE TO SAY

Star Wars: A New Dawn
by John Jackson Miller is available now.

HAVE YOU?

REBEL FRIENDS!

MEET...

CARRIE BECK IS A MEMBER OF THE STAR WARS LUCASFILM STORY GROUP AND ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AND CO-CREATOR OF STAR WARS REBELS!



Above: Carrie Beck.

Opposite page, from top: New character Ezra takes aim; Royston Roberts.

Can you tell us about your day-to-day role on the show? I am a part of the story development process, working with and supporting our writers and other producers from premise to final script stage. From feedback on story concepts to notes on scripts, I'm in the thick of it!

I get the joy of hearing each script being brought to life at every cast recording. From time to time I work with our great marketing and publicity teams on various special activations. Additionally, I do a lot of daily management of story information and have regular communication with the team at Disney Television Animation.

As a co-creator of *Rebels* can you talk a bit about the genesis of the show?

We started with a point on the timeline that we genuinely wanted to explore: to visit the galaxy during this age of oppression and to connect with people who really want to make a difference in the lives of the everyday people affected by the Empire. The very earliest conversations were about showcasing a group dynamic—I'm not going to lie—I was definitely drawing upon some inspiration from *The A-Team* at that time! While the show evolved from there it has always been consistent in its desire to bring audiences back to that feeling of *A New Hope*.

What makes for a great Star Wars story?

Great characters, witty banter, cool vehicles, epic space battles... All kinds of detail to the universe that sparks the imagination!



love of Star Wars. While I love so many aspects of the universe, as a young girl Princess Leia spoke to me. She didn't take crap from anyone and she always had a plan. I wanted to be like her—hair and all!

Have there been any ideas discarded that you were sad to see go?

No and here's why: No ideas ever truly get discarded. We may move on and choose other directions, but some version of those ideas always live on and come back as something even better. Over the years I've learned that the more you let go, the better it gets.

Can you hint at some of the highlights coming up?

I can't say... I know too much!



MEET...

**RAYNE ROBERTS, LUCASFILM
STORY GROUP, ADDITIONAL
PRODUCTION SUPPORT ON
STAR WARS REBELS**

Tell us about your role at Lucasfilm? I am a creative executive here at Lucasfilm, which means I help to develop much of the storytelling we are creating for the feature films and on television. My day-to-day role includes helping to source our episodic writers and participating in our writers' summits, where we come up with all of the stories and episodes for each season of the show. From there, I am giving notes on story outlines and drafts to our writers and producers, and participating in story meetings where we continue to hash out character arcs and plot points for each episode, refining the scripts at various intervals. Once the episodes go into



production, I continue to provide feedback on how the episodes are playing out story-wise once they are animated.

What are the key ingredients of a great Star Wars story?

For me, a great Star Wars story includes a sense of adventure; an incredibly motivated main character or group of characters; a greater purpose or goal that is driving the characters to influence something beyond their individual lives,

juxtaposed with something emotional and personal that is driving the characters internally; and, finally, the mystique and power of the larger energy force that binds the galaxy: the Force.

What's been the biggest challenge you've overcome on the show so far?

The biggest challenge by far was getting *Star Wars Rebels* up and running, developed and produced, as quickly as we did for the first season, at the same time we were developing and prepping Episode VII, and all of the other various transmedia projects we have begun. It was an incredible challenge that pulled the entire company together in a fun way as we embarked on this new era of storytelling.

Would you say that *Star Wars* is a unique franchise and, if so how, is it different from previous things you've worked on?

Star Wars is a very unique franchise. It is in essence, a living myth, which has affected so many people, young and old, around the world. Its scale and scope and sheer power is what differentiates it from other projects I've worked on. It's a great responsibility and honor to help shepherd the stories of a world that means so much to so many people.

Now that the main cast have recorded their roles, will that change the way the characters are written for season two? Having spent the last year working with the actors who have helped shape our main characters, we are definitely more aware of the strengths and unique attributes each actor brings to their role, which does influence how we write their characters to respond or speak in certain scenarios, absolutely. It's a fun interchange.

Can you describe the show in one sentence?

Star Wars Rebels is an adventure show that focuses on a street-smart teenage boy who just might have what it takes to be a Jedi, and who joins a small band of rebels that engages in daring missions of resistance against the evil Galactic Empire. ♦

REBEL WITH

STAR WARS REBELS MARKS ACTOR TAYLOR GRAY'S FIRST TIME DOING VOICE-OVER WORK. HE TOLD *STAR WARS INSIDER* ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES PLAYING THE FORCE-SENSITIVE KID OF THE GROUP, EZRA BRIDGER. INTERVIEW: AMY RATCLIFFE

Star Wars Insider: Tell us about Ezra Bridger and what you like about the character.

Taylor Gray: I have grown to like everything about this character. He's a young kid who is Force-sensitive, and he's unaware that he's tapping into something bigger than himself. He believes at first that these innate strange abilities are just instinctive and part of who he is, but once he comes across the rebel crew, the other characters begin to open up his eyes and teach him what powers he really has. He begins to harness them. It's very fun because he's not a bad kid, but he's a kid who's been wronged by the Empire. He's maybe a little sour about that and therefore acts on those feelings. I think he embodies the word "rebel" through and through.

Ezra is practically living on the streets and getting by on his own on the planet Lothal, but when he meets the crew of the *Ghost*, he's no longer alone. What's it like for him to basically gain a family?

It's hard for him at first. When he comes across the other rebels and they try to bring him in, at first, he's completely opposed to it. He wants to go back and handle things on his own, but he has a bond with Kanan and Kanan is the real reason why he stays with the rebel crew. Kanan went through the same type of things as Ezra did as far as being Force-sensitive, so he's able to connect with him on that level and their relationship grows. Theirs is one of the main relationships throughout the show. That's the real reason he stays, and he ends up enjoying having a family. It's something he hasn't had for a while so it means a lot to him, and he becomes very loyal and makes [the crew of the *Ghost*] his first priority.

As you got deeper into the story and saw what the Empire was like in this time period, what surprised you?

It's cool because *Rebels* bridges the gap between the two trilogies in the saga. I feel like that's a pretty big section of Star Wars that hasn't been tapped into, and I think that it's so cool to follow the rebels. They're the ones I was rooting on when I was younger; I always wanted the rebels to beat the Empire [in the original trilogy]. [In *Star Wars Rebels*] The Empire is in control of things, but there's hope—the show kind of hangs on that word. The rebels are starting to come up with some plans, and they're gaining some power and strength and beginning a movement. The rebels are leading that charge. They're the trailblazers.



TAYLOR GRAY IS EZRA BRIDGER

A CAUSE



A close-up portrait of Ezra Bridger, a young man with dark blue hair and blue eyes. He is wearing a brown leather jacket over a black turtleneck. His right arm is a mechanical prosthetic with a glowing blue lightsaber blade at the end. He has a determined expression, looking slightly off-camera. The background is a textured grey wall.

"WHEN EZRA COMES
ACROSS THE OTHER
REBELS AND THEY TRY TO
BRING HIM IN, AT FIRST
HE'S COMPLETELY
OPPOSED TO IT."

Star Wars Rebels features a ragtag sort of group fighting against the Empire, and it seems to parallel Episode IV. Do you see any similarities between them?

It's completely true. That little group they have [in Episode IV], that's what you feel on this show. I think what got everyone excited about the original *Star Wars* movies is that group's dynamic and the rapport between all of them. They all speak their mind, they're all opinionated and strong characters, and that's how the rebels are. There's definitely a parallel between the characters but also the storylines—it's still a group trying to fight against the Empire even though there are a lot of things and obstacles that get in the way.

"WE GO DEEP INTO THESE CHARACTERS, WHICH I FEEL KIND OF LACKS SOMETIMES IN ANIMATION."

What are you most excited for fans to see in *Star Wars Rebels*?

The animation. That's something that I keep talking about. When I was at *Star Wars* Weekends I was mentioning to everyone that it blows my mind how good it is. I've seen little clips here and there, and the parts I have seen look unbelievable. People are going to be blown away. It references Ralph McQuarrie's original artwork for *Star Wars* and aesthetically, everything is beautiful.

Also, the dialogue of the show is awesome. It's like the original trilogy in the sense that it has that sarcastic, witty banter. The dialogue is so exciting, even without the action—don't get me wrong, there's a ton of action in *Rebels*—but the dialogue is so on point. We go deep into these characters, which I feel is sometimes lacking in animation. I think people are really going to have their favorites and relate to certain characters.

And the weapons that are used! Ezra has this slingshot with these little stun-type balls on his wrist, and I think that's a new thing that we haven't seen.

This is the first time you've done voice-acting work. What a group to start with! What's the transition to voice-acting been like, and what's it like in the recording room?

Oh, it's a blast. Everything has been different.







"[BEING A GUEST AT] STAR WARS WEEKENDS WAS THE COOLEST THING... PEOPLE ARE STOKED ABOUT REBELS!"



Normally there's a camera, you sit through an hour of hair and makeup, and you've got to block shots. This is amazing because I can walk in wearing sweats. It's so fun, and everyone is there. I guess that's not a normal thing with animation, but Dave Filoni, the head of it all, the mastermind, says he really likes that and I understand because it's easier to work off of people—it's really great for all of us. We've all become so close.

On the first day, I got so many notes! We go for a take and I would turn to Freddie Prinze Jr., who plays Kanan, and say my lines just as I normally would. He would glance at me, but then when he would say his lines he kept looking forward. And then at the end of the take, they'd say, "That was a great one, but can we just do it again and Taylor, can you make sure you look at the mic?" I'm like, "Oh yeah, of course." It took a little while to get used to that and to look at a little microphone in front of you rather than everyone else. Once I got used to that though, it just flowed.

You mentioned *Star Wars Weekends*. You appeared at two of them. What was it like to attend and already be like a rock star to fans before *Star Wars Rebels* has even aired?

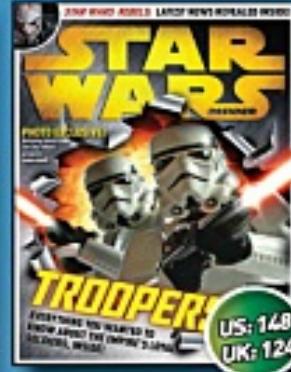
It blew my mind. I had no idea what I was in store for. Going two weekends in a row was fun because the next weekend I got to bring my entire family out and I kind of knew the ropes a little bit more, and I was more comfortable. But that first weekend, it was literally insane. It was the coolest thing. So many people are looking forward to it [Rebels], which I did not expect. I thought maybe some people would come up and talk to me and know me from other things I've done but no, people are stoked about Rebels. It just got me even more excited because I got to talk about it for six days straight.

It's so cool to hear people's theories and what they think is going to happen. I've got to say some fans are spot-on, and I have to be like, "Oh, maybe that will happen," when in the back of my mind I'm like, "Wow, it's like you had one of our scripts!" It seems like there is a code of ethics for *Star Wars* fans in general because everyone was incredibly nice and incredibly passionate, but they all had respect and understood when I couldn't say anything. I felt so honored and grateful to be able to talk to them and meet so many awesome people. It was a blast for me and I just hope that we get to go to more of them because it was so fun.

There are already fans dressing like Ezra. Does that surprise you?

I think I took three or four pictures with different Erazes. It was insane. I feel like I keep repeating myself, but it blew my mind. I didn't expect that. I know they've only released a little bit of information so far about *Rebels*, but people are grabbing it and running with it. I just hope they enjoy the show as much as we enjoy making it. I think it's really something of quality. ☺

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CHOPPER ROLLS OUT!

WHEN LUCASFILM NEEDED A SPECIAL DROID, IT TURNED TO DROID-BUILDER MICHAEL MCMASTER TO CREATE A FEISTY SCREEN-ACCURATE ASTROMECH! INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN WILKINS



Star Wars Insider: How did this live-action version of Chopper come about?

Michael McMaster: I maintain the Lucasfilm R2-D2, which is used for public relations. About a year ago, [Lucasfilm senior events lead] Mary Franklin approached me with the idea of building a new droid from *Star Wars Rebels*. She said [Star Wars Rebels' supervising director] Dave Filoni was hoping to have one before the R2 Builders Club got wind of it and made an army of them!

How long did it take to put him together? I spent about 87 days working on the build, start to finish.

"I WAS WORRIED CHOPPER MIGHT NOT WORK PROPERLY FOR THE BIG REVEAL!"

What are the challenges in building a droid? One of the most challenging aspects of the build was simply trying to get all the details correct. Fortunately, I had plenty of reference material provided to me, and was always able to ask for more information if I was unsure about a specific detail. Also, everything had to be scratch-built, so that raised its own set of challenges. The droid is similar in many ways to other droids in the *Star Wars* universe, but there are a few things that



are unique to Chopper as well. The dome arms, which were a tribute to the original sketches by the great Ralph McQuarrie, is one example.

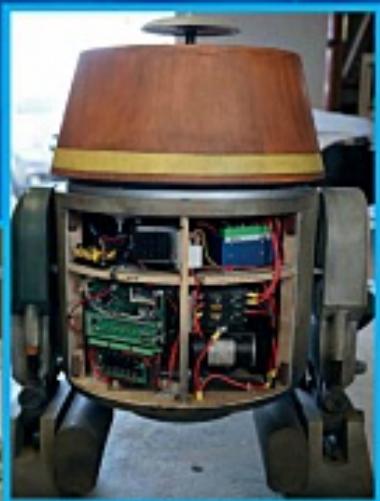
What did you learn from building R2 and WALL-E?

Well, Chopper is similar to R2 in his overall design, which helped as I was already very familiar with how he operated mechanically. WALL-E was

my first entirely scratch-built robot, and that certainly gave me the confidence to tackle this project.

He's 100% accurate—what was the most difficult thing to replicate?

Most of the build was relatively simple, but the design of the center wheel probably gave me the most trouble. In the animated series, the wheel sticks out at an angle, which works fine for an



Opposite page:
Michael poses with
Chopper and R2-D2!

This page, clockwise
from top left:
Chopper meets
some of the team at
Lucasfilm; a close-up
look at the intricate
detailing of the droid;
an astromech stand-off
between Chopper and
R2; "Look at, droid!"
McMaster's amazing
creations: WALL-E,
Chopper, and R2-D2;
a look at the
complicated electronics
that power Chopper

Lucasfilm photos
by Joel Aron;
behind-the-scenes
photos by Michael
McMaster



animated character, but is frustrating when trying to use a castering wheel, which is what I wound up using. The wheel would loop up and bind if tipped at an angle, so I had to rework the design a tiny bit so that it would turn smoothly.

How did it feel when Chopper was unveiled to the Lucasfilm team?
I was actually a nervous wreck at that point. It was very exciting to have the team

who designed the robot finally get to see it in person, but at that point it had only been tested for a very short period of time. I was worried something might not work properly for the big reveal. Fortunately, he ran perfectly, which was a great relief!

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to build droids?
I would encourage anyone interested in droid-building to seek out the R2 Builders

Club. It's a great resource and the members are very encouraging. We can be found on Yahoo Groups (R2 Builders Club), or you can visit Astromech.net. Your level of experience does not limit your ability to create a droid, as we have builders from every walk of life. Anyone can build, trust me. ☺

Special thanks to Matt Martin and Mickey Capoferra at starwars.com for their help with this article.

MANDALORIAN



ACTRESS TIYA SIRCAR JOINS THE
STAR WARS REBELS CAST AS THE
ARTISTIC MANDALORIAN REBEL,
SABINE WREN! INTERVIEW:
JONATHAN WILKINS

STAR WARS



S. Star Wars Insider: This seems like a very different project for you. Is that what attracted you to audition for the show?
Tiya Sircar: You would be absolutely right, in that it's voice-over and I have a lot more experience doing on-camera acting. The whole science-fiction genre, and specifically Star Wars, is a whole new world to me; I've never done anything like it. It's really exciting.

When I auditioned for the show, I actually had no idea it was Star Wars. It had a code name, which was "Wolf." So I got a call to audition for what I thought was a new Disney animated series. I didn't actually know it was Star Wars until I got the call that I got the job. So it was doubly exciting, like: Yay I got the job and then, Oh my god it's Star Wars!

"I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS DOING STAR WARS UNTIL I GOT THE CALL THAT I GOT THE JOB!"

And you're not allowed to tell anyone when you're doing Star Wars?

We had actually been recording full episodes for quite a while before anyone knew that there was a new Star Wars animated series happening, so it was very top secret. I couldn't tell any of my friends or family; it was frustrating but super-exciting! I couldn't share the news with anyone, until I got the okay from Disney and Lucasfilm.

Now that they know that I'm voicing a new Star Wars character, many of my friends are coming out of the woodwork as Star Wars fans!

So when you got the part were you a Star Wars fan? I had seen the original Star Wars trilogy as a kid, and I was a fan. I knew that it was really special, but I think I was too young to fully appreciate it. Since then, I've gone back and watched the original trilogy and now I totally now get what the fuss is

about. I've been binge-watching episodes of *The Clone Wars* now that they're on Netflix; not only because Dave Filoni is my boss—it's good to do my homework—but I just want to soak up as much *Star Wars* as I can now that I'm part of the universe.

What can you tell us about Sabine?

Well, she's Mandalorian, which is the most recognizable thing about her. As you might figure, she's an expert in combat and weaponry and an explosives expert! She loves to blow things up and she's really good at it.

But I think what sets her apart is, she's a warrior but also she's an artist—a graffiti artist. So it's fitting that she's really anti-establishment, she tags things. I think that's a really cool, special thing about her. Not only does she blow things up, she does it with flair and panache. She leaves these little tagged signatures anytime the Ghost crew attack the Empire. She's a teenager with a strong, no-nonsense attitude.

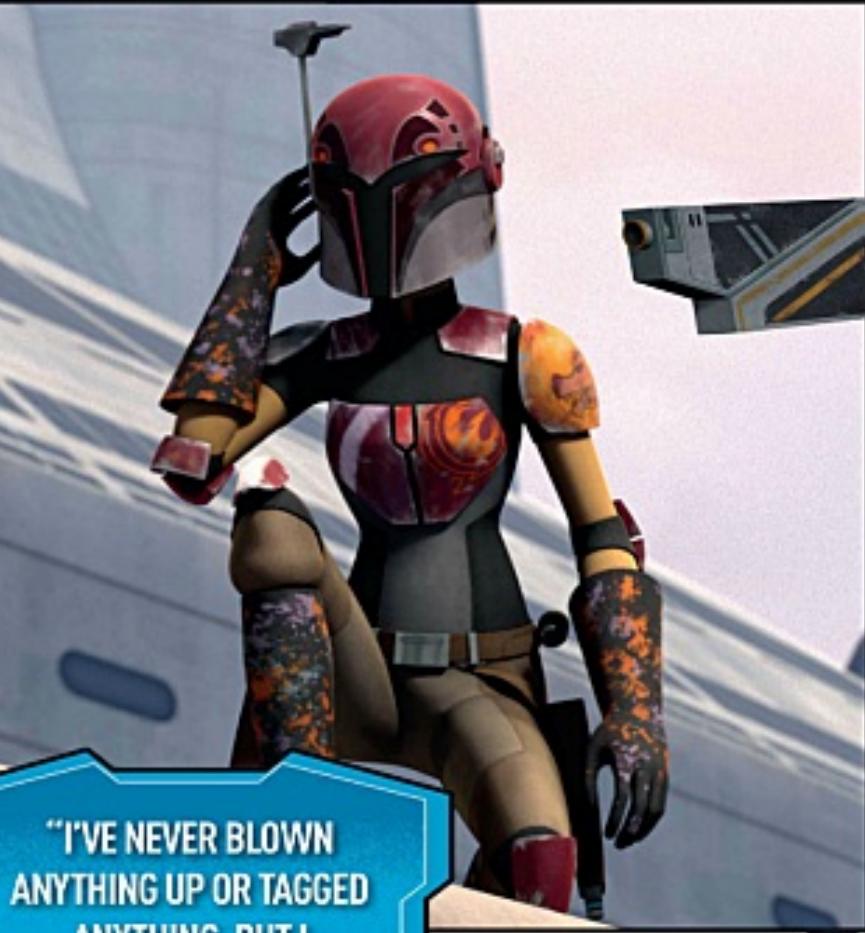
Is she anything like you?

She's awesome, so I hope I'm a little bit like her! I love smart, strong female characters, and I love that I get to portray a teenage girl who isn't interested in superficial stuff; she's got a good head on her shoulders, she's very sharp and quick-witted. So I would love to think we have a little bit in common, but she's more of a kick-butt kind of character than I am. I've never blown anything up, nor have I ever tagged anything, but I live vicariously through Sabine!

Star Wars has this huge female fan-base; it seems just as popular with the girls as guys. Why do you think this is?

I don't see why girls shouldn't be interested in all the action *Star Wars* has to offer, and the science-fiction aspect of it. I can't think of a reason why girls wouldn't be just as interested in it as guys, and I love that Princess Leia is iconic, and Ahsoka is this incredible female character; she's strong and she's a Jedi—and who wouldn't want to be a Jedi?

What I think is really cool about *Rebels* is that these two new female characters



**"I'VE NEVER BLOWN
ANYTHING UP OR TAGGED
ANYTHING, BUT I
LIVE VICARIOUSLY
THROUGH SABINE!"**

are going to be introduced to the *Star Wars* universe, and they're so different from each other, but they're both, I think, really intelligent and strong women: Hera is this wonderful character—she's nurturing, but she goes out there and attacks the Empire just as fiercely as Kanan or Zeb, or whoever else; and Sabine is an interesting character as well. So I hope that female *Star Wars* fans will appreciate these two new characters. Even though the show hasn't come out, I've already got messages from female fans saying "Oh my gosh, I can't wait for

Sabine," and "I'm already working on my Halloween costume" and all kinds of stuff. So the outpouring of support from *Star Wars* fans in general, but especially female fans, has been overwhelming and amazing.

The Rebels cast have already been embraced by the fans—what do you make of that?

It was incredible, beyond my wildest imagination. Dave Filoni told me 'this is what it's going to be like, prepare yourself', but there's no preparing yourself for your first *Star Wars* Weekends. And yeah, it was so special and no-one's even seen the

show yet, and yet we had autograph-signings and people who had drawn pictures of our characters, it was wonderful; and so much fun to meet these incredible people and to have a connection to those people already. I've been receiving tweets in Mando, which I'm trying to learn so I can translate these tweets that I'm getting. My *Star Wars* weekend was so much fun, I hope to do it again. The enthusiasm the fans were showing for a show they haven't even seen yet was amazing. I appreciate it so much. And now I just want people to see the show!

What has been the biggest surprise working on the show?

I think the history, and how deep and rich the mythology is, because, you know, I'm not like Freddie Prinze Jnr. (*Kanan*) who knows every detail of the *Star Wars* universe. And learning all of it now, being exposed to it now, the Expanded Universe and all kinds of things I wasn't familiar with before, it's just been such a learning experience that I'm trying to soak up as much as I can. Growing up, I was a big fan of Greek and Roman mythology, and this is right in line with that, learning about all these incredible characters and their relationships and their stories and the different time periods. It's a lot but I love it, so I'm all in it!

What are the challenges of voice acting compared to doing live-action work?

It's funny because Taylor Gray (Ezra) and I have a lot more experience doing on-camera acting instead of voice over. You've got Vanessa Marshall (Hera) and Steve Blum (Zeb), who have done nearly only voice-over work, then Freddie's somewhere in the middle—he does it all! Vanessa will be like, "How do you guys do the on-camera stuff—it's so weird!" Taylor and I are like, "How do you do all these crazy voices?"

In a lot of voice-over work, you do your acting in the sound booth by yourself, then you leave and that's that. We get to do something really great, which I think *The Clone Wars* got to do as well. We record all of our episodes together as a group. It's special because we're actually acting these scenes live, in person, and I think that really enriches the entire experience; it makes for better scenes, and better dialogue between the characters.

I've done other work where the animation is finished, and I just come in and do the voice to match what I see. We get to do it the other way around, which is so cool because they record video



of us acting together in the booth and then send the videos of our recording sessions to the animators. The animators actually use our facial expressions to inform the characters.

It's great because I'm watching Hera and she looks an awful lot like Vanessa even though she's green and has lekku on her head. Each of the characters are eerily similar to the voice actors. I guess that's surprising as well, seeing how much like us they really are. It's a little disconcerting at first, but in the coolest way!

What makes a good voice director?

Dave Filoni knows everything about Star Wars, so that helps! He's been doing this for a long time, but his enthusiasm and zeal for creating these stories has not diminished. He knows all the nuances and all the things that made *The Clone Wars* a success, and hopefully will make *Rebels* as popular. He's so fun to work with; he makes it such a safe environment to try something out. It's a really supportive environment. And if you don't know something, he knows the answer!

Did Sabine look like what you'd envisioned?

We had actually seen the mock-ups of our

characters; I knew what she looked like, but I had never seen her animated.

How does it feel to be immortalized as an action figure?

It's so awesome! The two female characters were revealed at San Diego Comic-Con International this year. I haven't fully processed it yet, so I am beyond excited!

I'm such a big fan of my character, I'm so proud and excited. I've never really had an action figure before, so for her to be a Star Wars character is amazing!

Can you talk about Sabine's relationship to the other characters?

Hera's the matriarch of the whole group; she takes care of everyone, which is funny because Vanessa's a bit like that.

It's like art imitates life, or



life imitates art, because each of us has assumed these positions in the crew. It's the same with Taylor, he's the youngest, so we pick on him, give him a hard time and he's always like, "Guys, come on!" Same with Freddie—he's like the big brother, always telling people what to do and how best to do it! He's always encouraging each of us in a really sweet way.

Sabine is a teenager, but she's very mature, so she doesn't feel that young. Whereas Ezra is this new kid; he shows up and she doesn't have time for him. He's too young, she's 16, he's 14, so she feels like she's light years beyond him! He tries to be friendly but Sabine gives him a hard time. They have a funny relationship where he tries to impress her and she's like, "Yeah, yeah, kid, that's nice."

Hera and Kanan run the show. Sabine defers to them. They call the shots and she makes it happen.

And then Zeb, he's the brawn, but he's also very funny. He has a surly attitude sometimes, but it's all in good fun. Sabine and Zeb work in tandem a lot—she's blowing stuff up, he's throwing people around, so they have a lot of fun together! There's Chopper, who's a little misunderstood by some. Sabine speaks many, many languages, and Sabine and Hera are the only two who understand what Chopper's saying. She and Sabine get along quite well.

"EACH CHARACTER IS A PART OF THE CREW FOR VERY SPECIFIC REASONS. SABINE'S IS REALLY INTERESTING—AND PRETTY HEAVY...."

It's fun to see how these relationships change and you get to see all their back-stories and how they came to be part of the *Ghost* crew. Each character is part of the crew for very specific reasons. Sabine's is really interesting—and pretty heavy—but once fans see why she's there, it's going to become more and more interesting to see how her story unfolds. ☀

A NEW TAKE ON A

DISNEY'S *PHINEAS AND FERB* RECENTLY CROSSED PATHS WITH LUKE SKYWALKER AND FRIENDS IN A SPECIAL TONGUE-IN-CHEEK EPISODE THAT ANSWERS SOME CRUCIAL *STAR WARS* QUESTIONS! *PHINEAS AND FERB* CREATORS DAN POVENMIRE AND JEFF "SWAMPY" MARSH REVEAL ALL! INTERVIEW: JONATHAN WILKINS

Star Wars Insider: How did the idea to do a *Phineas and Ferb*/*Star Wars* crossover come about?

Dan Povenmire: Last year, we did a Marvel crossover special that turned out really well. That sort of emboldened us. When we saw that Disney had purchased Lucasfilm, Swampy and I just looked at each other and said, "Crossover!"

Jeff "Swampy" Marsh: Do it!

DP: Within five minutes, I had drawn a picture of Doofenshmirtz as Darth Vader. I took a picture of it and I texted it to the head of the studio with the message: "I smell crossover!" He wrote back saying, "That's the first thing I thought, too!"

We decided to take the idea of not doing it with our characters in those roles, like *Family Guy* or making fun of them like, you know making fun of the scenes in *Star Wars* the way *Robot Chicken* did.

SM: It's been done.

DP: We're not doing the *Mad Magazine* version. We felt like, what if we leave *Star Wars* entirely alone and just have *Phineas and Ferb* be Luke's next door neighbors on the next moisture farm over and they get involved in an adventure that keeps connecting with *Star Wars*—the things they do affect and cause things that happen in *Star Wars* and vice versa. We felt like that would be a lot more difficult, but a lot more fun if we could do it right, and I feel like we've done it right.

SM: If you've watched *Star Wars: Episode IV*, this really is the rest of the story!

SWI: So this is the special, special edition?

DP: Exactly! What I'm hoping is that somebody online cuts *Star Wars* together with this chronologically so that it's one big film!

SM: Because it is possible to do.

DP: Maybe I'll take some time off and do that!

SWI: You realize you've just put out a challenge for *Star Wars* fans? What are the ingredients for a good crossover?

SM: Respecting the characters that you're bringing into your world or whose world you are going into. It's so easy to go in and mock and kind of disrespect the other characters. You don't really gain anything; you alienate everybody. One of the things we really strived to do in both of the crossovers we've done is to treat all those characters with all the love and respect that we have for them. We never derive humor at their expense.

SWI: Can you talk a bit about the process of making the episode? How long did it take? What was the writing process?

DP: It took over a year.

SM: We can't figure out why the regular motion pictures take so long! They're dragging their heels.

DP: They're taking long lunches. Making an 11-minute episode of *Phineas and Ferb* takes about 10 months. I think this one took around a year and a half, from story all the way through. We came up with the concepts and the story, and pitched that to Lucasfilm, with some drawings to illustrate what it would look like. They responded very favorably and were just wonderful to work with. We got very few notes, other than they laughed at all the right places, so then we gave it to our storyboard teams to flesh it out. Then we sat in a big room and rewrote and rewrote and said, "Okay, that's a funny gag, this one is not."





THIS PAGE: THE LAUNCH POSTER FOR PHINEAS AND FERB STAR WARS
OPPOSITE PAGE: DAN Povenmire (far left) and "Swampy" Marsh (right), PROUD CREATORS OF THE HIT SHOW!

working because of the story here, but we can put something else in there." Then a whole board of drawings has to get thrown out because now we're doing something else!

SM: We converted one of our rooms here, our bullpen, into a kind of a Star Wars shrine, and decorated every wall with toys and sketches: It was our rebel base!

DP: We had all kinds of references, pictures, and screen grabs from the movie.

SM: And it kind of gave us a place to go in and problem-solve, because we did this the same way we do all of our other shows; we don't have a full script when we start, we had an outline—we knew where the story was going but, especially in this case where we were integrating with an existing movie, we really had to go through and work, creating the dialogue and the images together as we went along. We pulled the movie apart as we tried to figure out where those gaps existed and our comedy opportunities were. So it was a lot of back and forth and you find yourself going down a few rabbit holes and you have to say, "Oh wait—back up!"

DP: There was a lot of following the timeline of Star Wars to make sure that all works out. There's a scene there where Candace is hanging off a ledge in one of those big chasms inside the Death Star, and in the background of that scene, Luke and Leia swing by from Star Wars. Our storyboard artists were counting the number of laser blasts that go through and he was like, "Well, I was watching the show and it looks like there's four blasts, one of them hit the..." When we were trying to re-create any scene that was actually in Star Wars, we tried to re-create it as faithfully as we could in cartoon.

SWI: It sounds like you didn't need to go back and watch that movie...

"WE CONVERTED ONE OF OUR ROOMS HERE, OUR BULLPEN, INTO A KIND OF STAR WARS SHRINE, AND DECORATED EVERY WALL WITH TOYS AND SKETCHES."

DP: We didn't need to, but we did.

SM: It was a chore!

DP: I've seen that movie, probably 30-50 times? I did see it 25 times that first summer it was on. I was the very first kid in line for the very first matinee show of Star Wars in Mobile, Alabama. And I was there like two and a half hours early, and I was only the first kid by five minutes.

SM: For me, that's the kid I'm hoping we'll find, the kid who was the number two person in Mobile, Alabama! Because I want to find out who was in line just behind...

DP: Yeah, and if he finds out that bit of information he's going to be like, "Wait a minute, that kid that was in front of me and we started geeking out, that guy went on and made *Phineas and Ferb*? How bizarre is that?"

SWI: You never know, it could have been J.J. Abrams!

DP: It could have been!

SWI: So, how did the cast react to having the chance to play in the Star Wars universe?

DP: All of our cast are big fans of Star Wars.

SM: Vincent Martella (Phineas) was just beside himself with joy.

DP: Even though a lot of them were born after Star Wars came

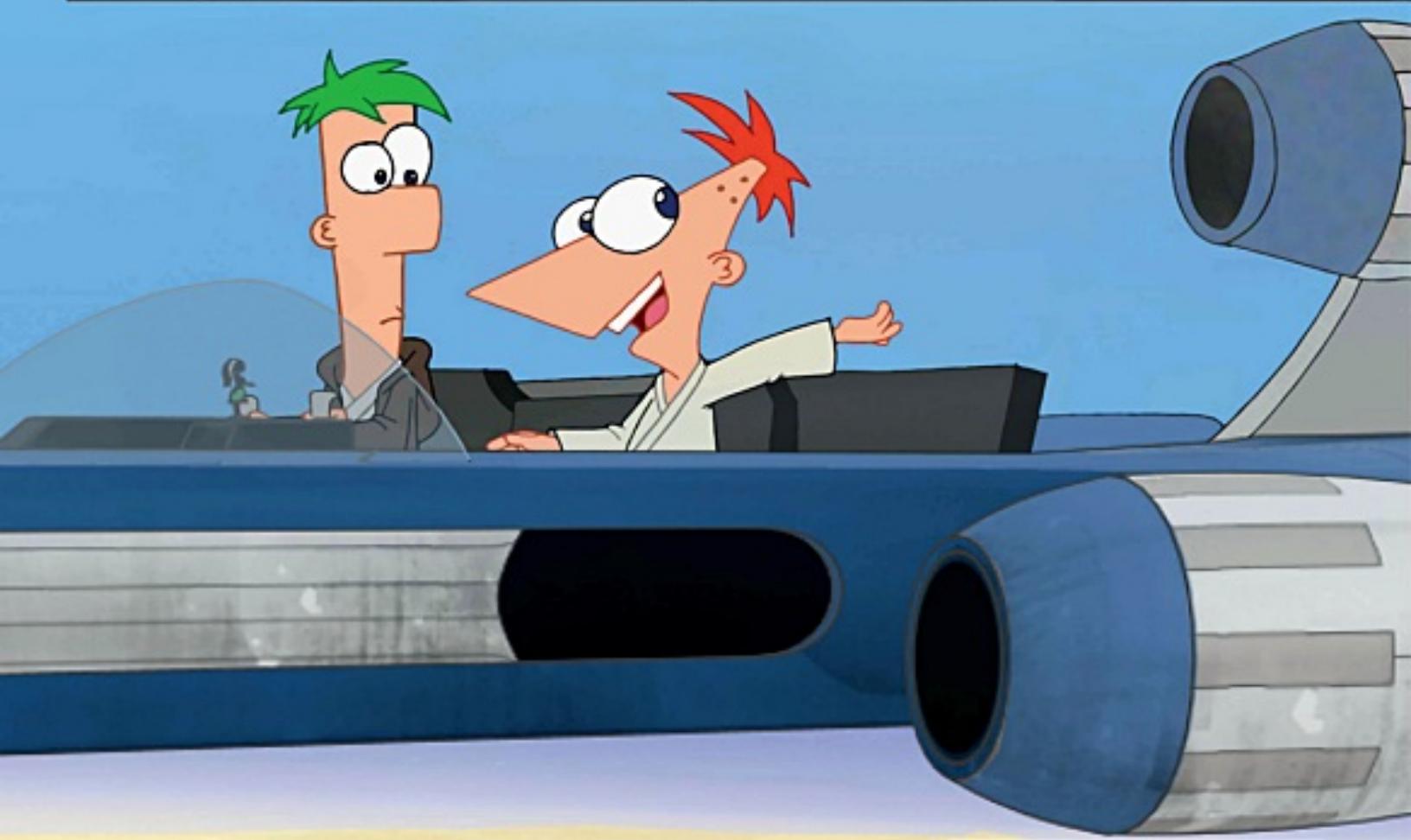
out, every new generation discovers it.

SM: A lot of people that we knew, that we'd had as guest stars, were very keen to come back and do something in this one. We were lucky enough to get Simon Pegg back; he was like, "Yeah, anything, I'll do it!"

DP: Simon Pegg plays See-Threepio and he does a great Threepio. I was very impressed.

SM: And then he did another part for us as well

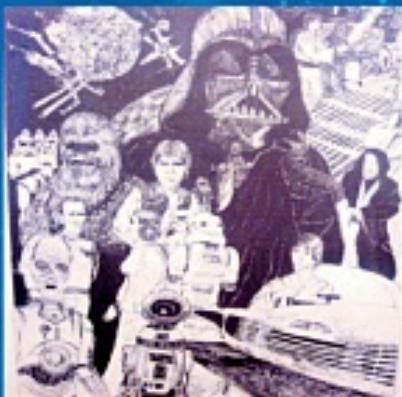




MAIN IMAGE: PHINEAS AND FERB
RUN INTO A FARMBOY LUKE
SKYWALKER ON TATOOINE!

ABOVE: PHINEAS BATTLES TO SAVE FERB
FROM THE DARK SIDE!

DAN POVENMIRE'S STAR WARS POSTER!



"Back in 1977 I was very disappointed at the lack of what I thought were good Star Wars posters, and so I did one myself in pen and ink and I sold copies of it at art fairs! My mom actually called 20th Century-Fox to see if that would be okay and they said, 'Yeah, it's fan art so he can. If he's just selling it as a piece of art he can sell it, it's not a problem.' But I made a lot of money for a kid. I went to an art fair for two days and I made \$500 selling \$5 prints of this Star Wars poster!"

It was with that money that I bought my first Super-8 camera and started doing my own movies. It was that poster that started me down this road."

that was a great little comedy piece, and the two guys from *Mythbusters* who both worked on *The Phantom Menace* as special effects guys.

SWI: You do a *Star Wars* project and people will do it for less than their normal fee!

SM: I've had a ton of "I'll do it for free!" offers.

DP: It's like, "Don't worry, we'll pay you!"

SM: You don't have to, it's fine!"

SWI: You've also got an actual *Star Wars* actor in the cast—Dee Bradley Baker from *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*! What does he bring to the show?

SM: The funny thing with Dee is, because of his incredible, peculiar, special skills,

what we really needed him for was his ability to make the sound of any creature or monster in the *Star Wars* universe. And to be able to act that sound with a subtlety that is breathtaking in its scope. We were able to come in and say, "We need you to make the Sarlacc feel a bit, disgruntled."

DP: Disgruntled Sarlacc, that's what we needed!

SM: And he can nail it!

SWI: *Star Wars* features some quite dramatic deaths. How do you deal with that on the show?

DP: Well we stayed away from Uncle Owen and Beru getting charred.

SM: ...Which was a shame, because it was easy to write really tasteless humor!

DP: We do have a very funny gag involving Alderaan getting blown up!

SM: That is a very good gag!

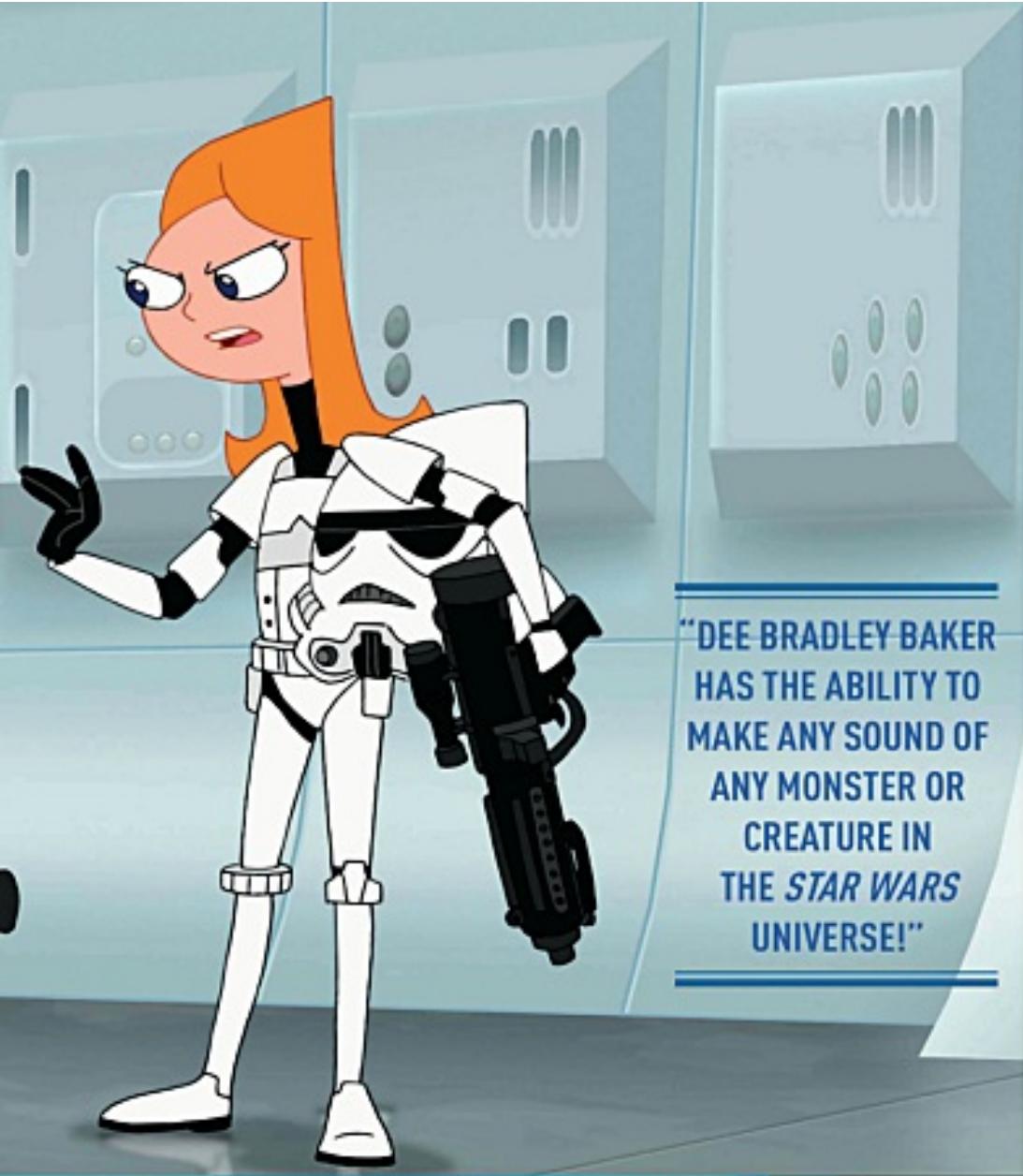
SWI: Were there any ideas that you were sad to have to cut?

DP: There's always stuff that you lose.

SM: There's a lot of great little lines that connected to the film. They filled in gaps or were little explanations. You really have to keep your eye on what's moving the characters and the story along. Stuff gets lost based purely on that criteria and sometimes you really wait until the last minute before cutting something. For us, whenever we see the film again and we see that missing line, there's a little part that's like a stab in the heart!

DP: We only have a certain amount of





"DEE BRADLEY BAKER HAS THE ABILITY TO MAKE ANY SOUND OF ANY MONSTER OR CREATURE IN THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE!"

ABOVE: BUJFORD BALJEET AND CANDACE REPORT FOR STORMTROOPER DUTY!

THIS IMAGE: HAN SOLO AND ISABELLA CONTEMPLATE THEIR FUTURE!



screen time and I feel like we filled it pretty much to the brim. We even feature the scene that was cut from the original movie of Luke with his hat on and seeing the space battle going on. There's a scene that connects to that scene in our movie. He has a conversation with Phineas and Ferb right before that scene. That'll be an Easter egg for the geeks!

SWI: What are your favorite moments on the show?

DP: There's one that Swampy and I both love. Our sort of Han Solo character is Isabella. She's this rough and tumble pilot and Han Solo is her nemesis in her career because he's always been one-upping her. He cut her off when she was set to make the Kessel Run in 11 parsecs, so she's got this thing against him all the way through. Toward the end she has left Phineas and Ferb in the lurch and she's on Yavin 4. She goes into a bar and encounters Han Solo, who is just about to blast off. They have a conversation in which they both come to the conclusion that they need to go help their friends.

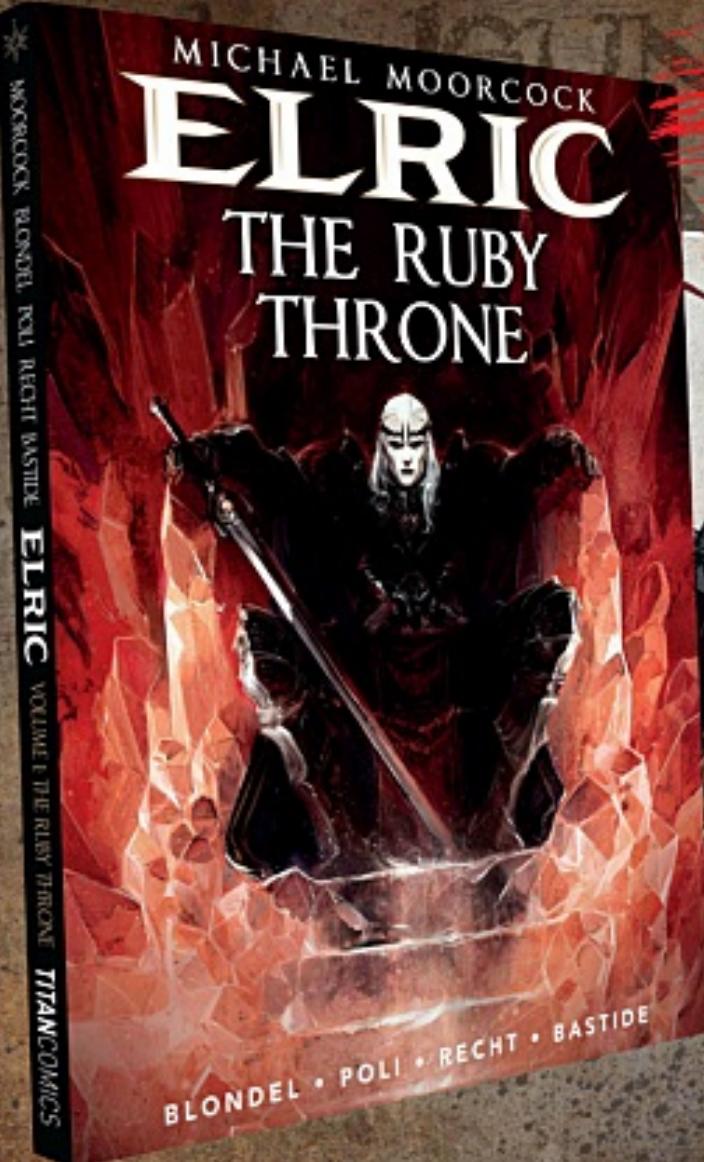
SWI: Will this be a one-off, or will Phineas and Ferb strike back?

SM: Well, it depends on ratings. If you ask us, we would happily do it.

DP: We would love to do *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. Nothing would give us more pleasure.

SM: Maybe if we're lucky we'll get to do the Holiday Special.... 🎄

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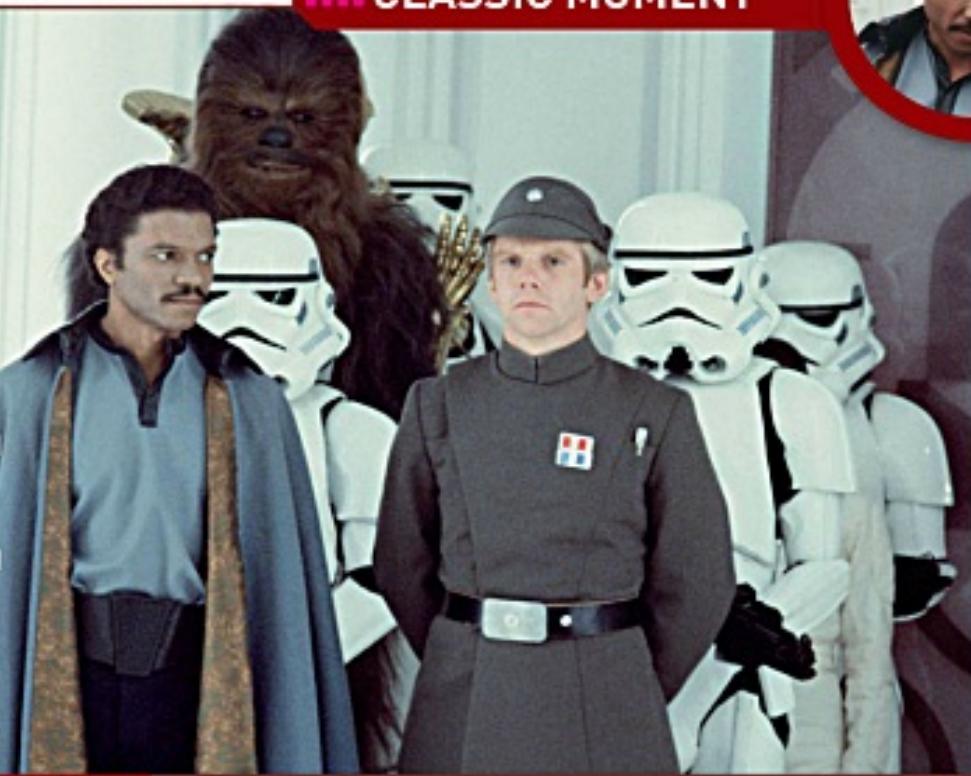
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LANDO'S SECOND SURPRISE



WORDS: NEIL EDWARDS

After Han has been frozen in carbonite and given to bounty hunter Boba Fett, Leia, Chewie, and C-3PO think they are being taken to Darth Vader's shuttle, accompanied by a group of stormtroopers, an Imperial officer and the seemingly treacherous Lando Calrissian. However, Lando has another surprise up his sleeve...

WHY IT'S A CLASSIC

When we first watched *The Empire Strikes Back*, we were all as shocked by Lando's betrayal of Han as his friends are.

However, as Han commented when he first saw his old friend again, Lando is now a responsible leader, with all of Cloud City's citizens reliant on him to keep them safe. If he'd refused to go along with Darth Vader's plans, would anything have stopped the Sith Lord from taking out his anger on Cloud City and its people? Vader's earlier comment to Lando that it would be unfortunate if he had to leave a garrison of stormtroopers in the city was no idle threat. Lando might have warned Han of the danger, but the civilians under his jurisdiction would have suffered just because Lando helped a friend he hadn't seen for years. Considering the Empire destroyed an important planet like Alderaan that was part of the Imperial Senate, a city of Tibanna gas miners operating outside of Imperial jurisdiction would have proved an even easier target. We may not agree with Lando's actions, but it's not difficult to understand them, especially as he does his best to redeem himself for them afterward.



His protestations are a little lost on Leia and Chewie, however, as we witness Leia's steeler side when she spits out that the rebels don't need any of Lando's help, and mocks Lando's excuse that he had no choice. We also see the true ferocity of an angered Wookiee, as Chewbacca is incensed by Lando's apparent betrayal of his best friend. Looking at the way he easily strangles Lando, we can well believe the stories of Wookiees pulling people's limbs out of their sockets! Leia and Chewie's anger proves to be a little counter-productive, though, as it could be argued that if they hadn't stopped to question Lando's actions here, they might have got to the landing platform in time to rescue Han from Boba Fett. It's also understandable that they wouldn't trust Lando, given his unpredictability, but he

proved them wrong. Lando's attempts to do the best he can for everyone who depends on him, no matter what the cost to his own conscience, surely make him one of the most interesting and ambiguous characters we're introduced to in the *Star Wars* movies.

WHAT THEY SAID

"Lando's charming and a bon vivant. He's a man who's devoid of all the clichés, a man of the future. The Lando character was good because you weren't sure which way he was going to go. That's always good when you write a character. There's a little bit of uncertainty that you can attribute to a kind of villain. The [ambiguity] makes it much more interesting." —*Billy Dee Williams* (Lando Calrissian), *Star Wars Insider* #58, March 2002

LEGENDS

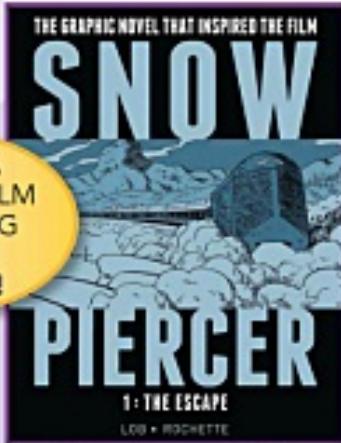
According to *Star Wars Legends*, after the rebels and Lando escape, the Empire does indeed occupy Cloud City. The city is eventually liberated by the rebellion soon after the Battle of Endor.

ESSENTIAL TRIVIA

Early concept art by Ralph McQuarrie for *A New Hope* included a gas giant version of Alderaan that included a floating prison very like Cloud City. ☀

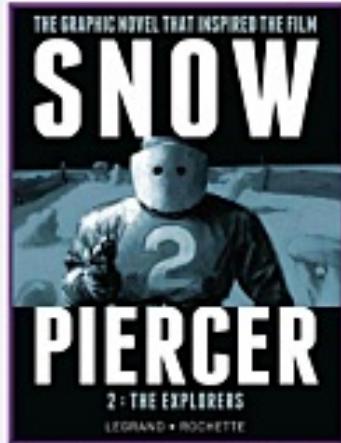
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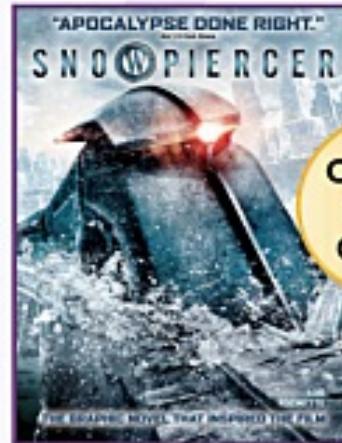


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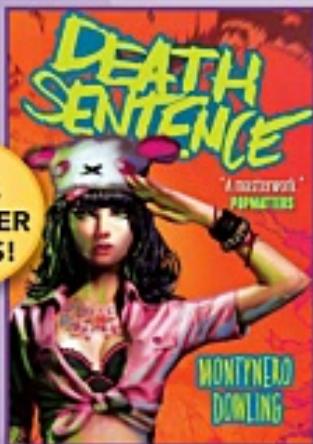
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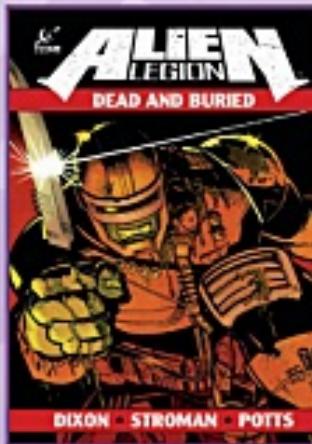


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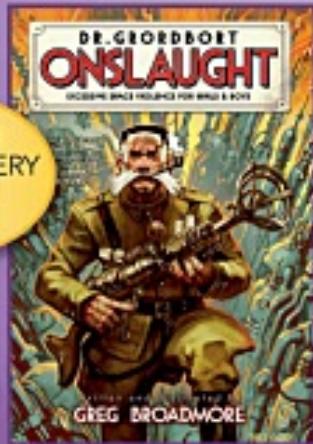


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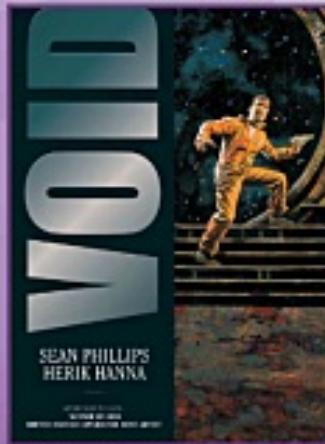
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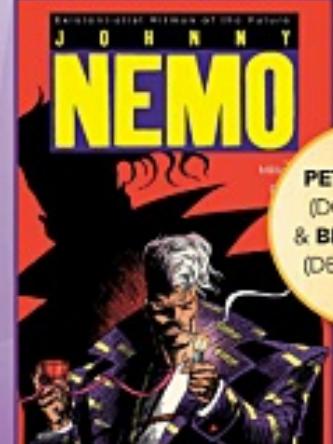


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*STAR WARS COSTUMES:
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By the fans, for
the fans!

96 BOUNTY HUNTERS

Meet the stars,
show the evidence,
win the bounty!

82 INCOMING
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"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BLASTER AT YOUR SIDE, KID."



PUBLISHING

THE LATEST FROM THE WORLD OF STAR WARS PUBLISHING! WORDS: DAN WALLACE

PAGEANTRY AND POWER

Get an Unprecedented Look at Classic Costuming in *Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy*

Darth Vader's hard-edged evil and Princess Leia's regal nobility wouldn't carry half their punch if it weren't for their iconic outfits. In *Star Wars Costumes: The Original Trilogy*, fans will finally get up-close and personal with the famous ensembles created for the filming of *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*.

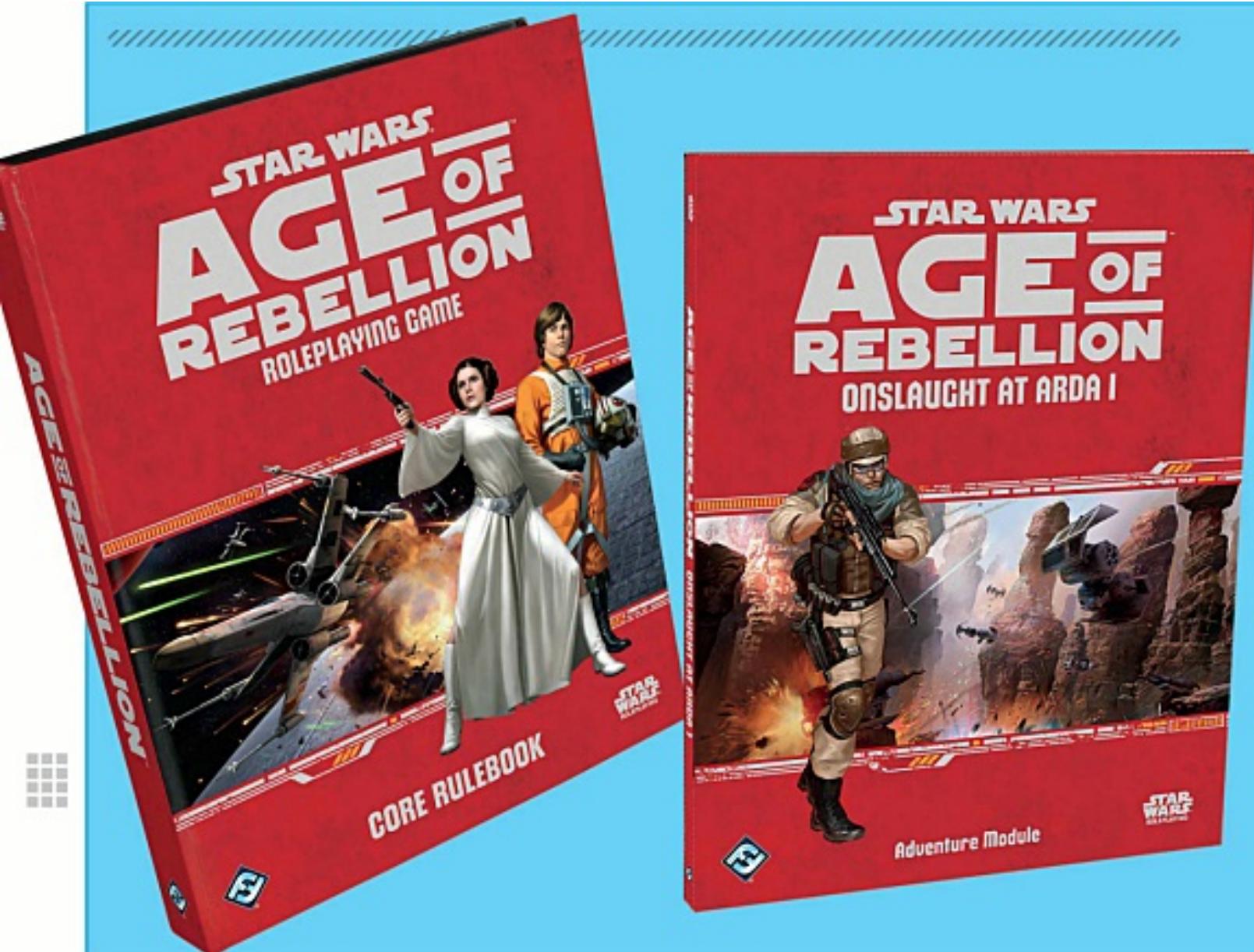
The Lucasfilm Archives unpacked the original costumes for all-angles, high-resolution photography, resulting in a large-format hardcover that showcases each outfit in all its detailed glory. The costumes are featured alongside artifacts from the time of their creation, including original concept art, production notes, and behind-the-scenes images. Writer Brandon Alinger also conducted new interviews for the book with classic trilogy designers John Mollo, Aggie Rodgers, and Nilo Rodis-Jamero, and collected fresh insights from wardrobe supervisors, seamstresses, and plastic shop workers.

"I've always been interested in the making of the original Star Wars films," says Alinger, who in 2007 was brought aboard to open the Los Angeles branch of the London-based Prop Store, which deals in film artifacts as collectible memorabilia. "Working with the costume designers for this book was one of the highlights. John Mollo, Aggie Rodgers, and Nilo Rodis-Jamero are three very different designers, but all brilliant in their own right. It was fantastic to hear about the



**STAR WARS.
COSTUMES
THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY**

Brandon Alinger
Forewords by John Mollo, Aggie Rodgers & Nilo Rodis-Jamero



PLAY YOUR ROLE

Fantasy Flight Invites You to Join the Age of Rebellion

Fantasy Flight Games has taken up the tradition of exciting, immersive Star Wars roleplaying games. After the success of 2013's *Edge of the Empire*, Fantasy Flight is now releasing *Star Wars: Age of Rebellion*—a cross-compatible roleplaying system where players are rebels fighting the Empire while dealing with stormtroopers, bounty hunters, and Force-sensitive "emergents."

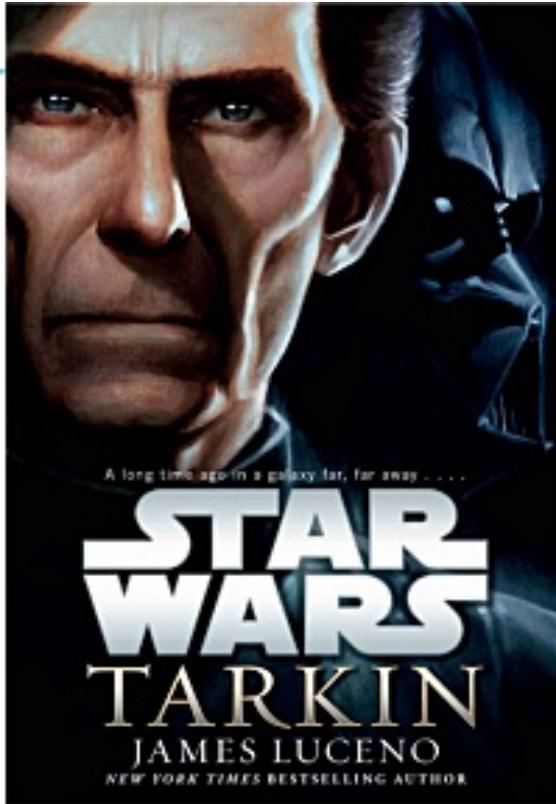
The *Age of Rebellion* Core Rulebook is the bible for creating gaming adventures in this new setting. This 464-page hardbound volume provides everything that players and Game Masters need to jump right in, including rules for character generation, combat guidelines, skill and talent descriptions, and charts detailing weapons, gear, vehicles, and starships, not to mention extensive background information on the *Star Wars* universe.

For GMs and players looking for adventure, *Onslaught at Arda I* is the first book-length supplement for *Age of Rebellion*. Taking

place shortly after the Battle of Yavin, the adventure begins at Arda I's secret Rebel base and quickly throws in a massive Imperial onslaught and an urgent need to expose an Alliance traitor. Writer Jeff Hall delivers on the breakneck action and intrigue that players expect, including visits to the swamp planet Jagomir and the Imperial world of Ord Radama.

Onslaught at Arda I also introduces new rules for mass combat, designed by Lead Developer Katrina Ostrander to simulate the epic scale of *Star Wars* combat without subjecting GMs to endless dice rolls. The mechanics draw upon variables such as the leadership and tactical skills of each side's commanders, allowing the dice pool to quickly determine whether the heroes hold the line against an enemy assault and the magnitude of their success.

The *Age of Rebellion* Core Rulebook and *Onslaught at Arda I* are available now.



IMPERIAL AMBITION

Evil Isn't Just for Sith Lords in *Star Wars: Tarkin*

Coming this November is the second book in the newly relaunched *Star Wars* adult fiction line from Del Rey Books. In collaboration with the Lucasfilm Story Group and LucasBooks, Del Rey kicked off the new era with John Jackson Miller's *Star Wars: A New Dawn* in September. With *Tarkin*, bestselling author James Luceno (*Star Wars: Darth Plagueis*) puts the spotlight on the famous Imperial governor and his cold, calculating villainy.

Featuring a cover by David Smit, *Tarkin* bridges the prequel and the classic trilogies with prominent roles for both Darth Vader and Emperor Palpatine. What kind of man would order the destruction of Alderaan and the deaths of millions with such casual contempt? Find out when *Tarkin* hits stores on November 4.

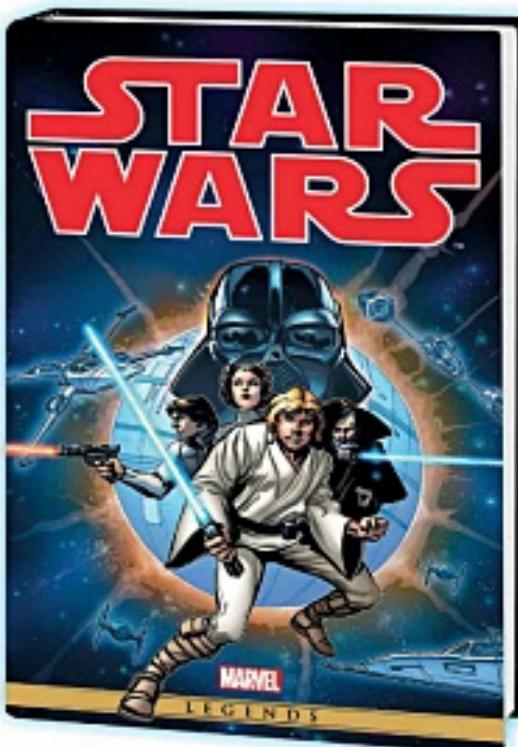
A MARVELOUS BEGINNING

Marvel Comics Kicks Off its *Star Wars* Reign With A Celebratory Look Back

After a gap of nearly 30 years, Marvel Comics has returned to its role as the official publisher of *Star Wars* comics. All-new, original comic series from Marvel are on their way, but to inaugurate the new direction the company is putting a well-earned spotlight on the classic series that started it all.

When the original *Star Wars* movie became a pop-culture phenomenon in May of 1977, Marvel was there. Their adaptation of the film spanned issues #1-6 of the *Star Wars* comic book series, and its best-selling success paved the way for its status as an ongoing title. Starting with issue #7—subtitled “New Planets, New Perils!” and presenting an all-new Han Solo and Chewbacca adventure—readers could get their *Star Wars* fix with a monthly supply of original content. As Luke, Leia, Han, Chewie, and the droids criss-crossed the galaxy, they found themselves in dire peril from the likes of the space pirate Crimson Jack, the deadly bounty hunter Valance, the scheming Imperials of the Tagge family, and an unusually walrus-faced “Jabba the Hut.”

Star Wars: The Original Marvel Years collects issues #1-44 of the *Star Wars* series, as well as *Star Wars Annual #1*. This



prime selection is brimming with a wealth of original storytelling and artwork, bookended by the iconic comic-book adaptations of *Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope* and *Star Wars: Episode V The Empire Strikes Back*.

“With *Star Wars* poised to return to its comic book home, what better time to revisit the first adventures of Luke, Leia, Han, Chewbacca, C-3PO, R2-D2 and, of course, Darth Vader?” says Marvel Editor-In-Chief, Axel Alonso. “I am extremely proud to present these original *Star Wars* stories in a massive and glorious Omnibus series.”

The oversized 880-page volume features the writing talents of Roy Thomas, Howard Chaykin, Archie Goodwin, Jo Duffy, and Chris Claremont, with pencils by Howard Chaykin, Carmine Infantino, Walter Simonson, Herb Trimpe, Michael Golden, Al Williamson and Mike Vosburg. Covers are by Howard Chaykin and Greg Hildebrandt.

Don't miss Luke's return to Tatooine, Leia's spy vs. spy battle of wits with Darth Vader, Han and Chewie's struggle to survive as arena gladiators, and Darth Vader's hunt for the identity of the X-wing pilot who destroyed the Death Star. *Star Wars: The Original Marvel Years* is available beginning January 2015.



INCOMING

THE LATEST STAR WARS GEAR YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION! WORDS: JAMES BURNS

COLLECTING STAR WARS REBELS

Unlike Star Wars, which launched with no merchandise when it was first released in 1977, the launch of Star Wars Rebels will be accompanied by a plethora of new products made by all your favorite Star Wars licensees!

FOR BUILDERS... LEGO

LEGO has launched two new Star Wars Rebels products: the *Ghost* (1929 pieces) comes complete with minifigures of Kanan Jarrus, Hera Syndulla, Zeb Orrelios, and a stormtrooper, whilst the *Phantom* (234 pieces), which docks with the *Ghost*, comes with minifigures of Ezra Bridger and Chopper (C1-10P).



FOR ACTION... HASBRO

Hasbro has lots of Star Wars Rebels-related goodies, starting with the regular action figures (first wave available now), which feature five points of articulation and great sculpts. There'll also be Mission Series 2-packs of action figures available featuring two

like-minded or opposing characters from the TV show, such as R2-D2 and C-3PO. There will also be a line of 12" figures.

The *Phantom* and the Inquisitor's TIE Advanced will fly onto shelves as part of the action figure vehicle range and there'll be some great roleplay

items, too, including the Inquisitor's double-bladed lightsaber, along with some masks.

If gaming is more your thing, Hasbro is launching a brand new tactical game called *Star Wars Command* which features characters and vehicles from *Star Wars Rebels*.



FOR RACERS... MATTEL

Mattel will be launching Star Wars Hot Wheels-themed Rebels vehicles, including Chopper and the Inquisitor!



PENDING LICENSOR APPROVAL



FOR DISPLAY... GENTLE GIANT

As they've done previously with both the Genndy Tartakovsky *Clone Wars* animated series and more recently *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, Gentle Giant will continue with exciting new maquettes from *Star Wars Rebels*. The first three maquettes coming are the Inquisitor, Ezra & Chopper, and Zeb. Expect to see all the main characters from the series brought out in this line.

PLUS!

FOR SCHOOL... INSTAMOTION

InstaMOTION will be bringing out a wide range of interactive stationery featuring characters and vehicles from the *Star Wars* saga, including *Rebels*, all just in time for those going back to school! Various items are coming, including pens, pencil cases, erasers, LCD watches, keychains, and more, some of which feature a free interactive app for Apple and Android devices.

FOR FUN... DISNEY

Disney is creating lots of exclusive *Star Wars Rebels* merchandise, including apparel, mugs, and pins. Some of this is available only in Disney parks around the world, while other items are available exclusively in Disney Stores and online.

FOR FASHION... HER UNIVERSE

Her Universe will bring women's apparel from *Star Wars Rebels* to fan girls all over the galaxy late in 2014 or early 2015.

FOR PLAYERS... WONDER FORGE

Wonder Forge will be bringing out a variety of dice and card games inspired by *Star Wars Rebels*.

FOR CUDDLING... COMIC IMAGES

Comic Images will be producing lots of plush toys from *Star Wars Rebels*. The first five will be the Inquisitor, Ezra, Chopper, a stormtrooper, and Zeb.



MOST WANTED

LEGO

LEGO Star Wars celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2014, and what better way to celebrate than to bring out new, improved versions of fan-favorite sets from years gone by, including the AT-AT, snowspeeder, Imperial Star Destroyer, and a certain hive of scum and villainy...



MOS EISLEY CANTINA (SET #75052)

The first LEGO Star Wars Cantina set (#4501) was released back in 2004. Like the new version, it came with a landspeeder and dewback, but had a much smaller piece count, at only 193 pieces, and came with five minifigures and a small section of the Cantina.

The new version of everybody's favorite hive of scum and villainy has 615 pieces and features a much larger Cantina, including the entrance (inside and outside) with droid scanner, part of the bar and two booths. There's also the stage for the band, and seats and a table to stage the infamous shootout between Han and Greedo. The Cantina also includes a dome roof, which opens, an entrance

with a sliding door, and slide-out floors. The dewback is an all-new design and the landspeeder has been upgraded, too. You'll also find a moisture vaporator and feeding area for the dewback.

The set comes with eight minifigures, including Han Solo and new versions of Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Greedo, sandtrooper, and three Bith musicians. Available: Now Price: \$69.99

OFFICIAL PIX

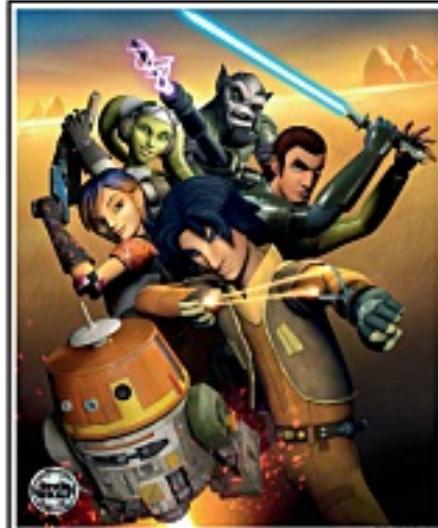
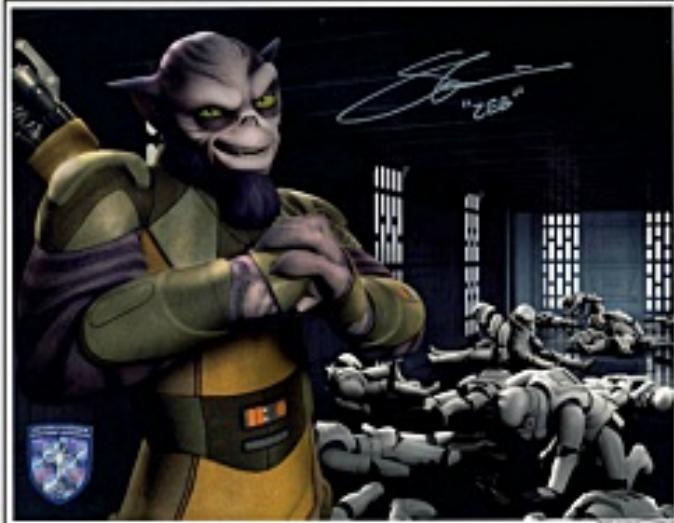
To celebrate the launch of Star Wars Rebels, Official Pix brings us our first new autograph offerings from the Rebels characters: Hera Syndulla and Zeb Orrelios, voiced by Vanessa Marshall and Steve Blum, respectively.

Each autograph is presented on an 8x10 photo, includes a certificate of authenticity, and is \$24.99.

In addition, Official Pix have the very first officially licensed photos from Rebels, all of which feature

a holographic logo sticker and are available in a variety of sizes and price points in regular matte finish —8x10 (\$5.99), 11x14 (\$12.99) and 16x20 (\$23.99).

Available: Now Pricing: As Above



FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

The fifth wave of expansions for the popular X-Wing miniatures game from Fantasy Flight Games marks the arrival of two hard-hitting, large-base starships, both of which arrive fully prepared for the heat of battle!

YT-2400 FREIGHTER EXPANSION PACK

A fast and resilient light freighter, the YT-2400 features 13 weapon emplacement points, making it an attractive vessel for smugglers such as Dash Rendar who favor a heavily armed "transport."

In X-Wing, the YT-2400 Freighter Expansion Pack presents this formidable light freighter as a rebel starship capable of equipping a turret-mounted cannon. Its detailed pre-painted miniature starship is further enhanced by four ship cards, 13 upgrades, one new mission, three debris cloud tokens, one maneuver dial, and all the tokens you need to fly it into battle!

VT-49 DECIMATOR EXPANSION PACK

The VT-49 Decimator is one of the Empire's most feared warships, often used to provide long-range reconnaissance or deploy raiding parties behind enemy forces. The VT-49 Decimator Expansion Pack brings



this intimidating Imperial gunboat to X-Wing as a hulking, large-base ship that towers over smaller starfighters. One detailed and pre-painted VT-49 Decimator miniature comes with four ship cards and 13 upgrade cards, including crew

members like Mara Jade. You'll also find a new mission, three obstacle tokens, a maneuver dial, and all requisite tokens.

Available: Q3 2014

Price: \$29.95-\$39.95

PPW TOYS



Mr. Potato Head, invented and developed by George Lerner in 1949, was first manufactured and distributed by Hasbro in 1952. It was the first toy to be advertised on television and has remained in production ever since its debut. It was originally produced as separate plastic parts with pushpins that could be stuck into a real potato or other vegetables, but due to complaints regarding rotting vegetables and new US government safety regulations, Hasbro began including a plastic potato body with the toy in 1964.



It wasn't until 2005 that Mr. Potato Head was introduced to Star Wars and the ultimate mashup [!] was introduced—Darth Tater was born. Since then we've had three additional Star Wars Mr. Potato Heads, including Spudtrooper, Artoo-Potatoo (with hologram Princess Tater) and the rarely seen Clone Tuber. In 2009, Disney, in collaboration with Hasbro and Lucasfilm, released two waves of additional Star Wars Mr. Potato Heads that were available exclusively in the Disney Parks, taking the number of characters to 12.



PPW Toys has worked closely with Hasbro to bring out collector-centric versions of Mr. Potato Head, featuring better sculpts and finer detail. These new versions are smaller than Hasbro's, featuring a 6" spud. This year sees four new Star Wars Mr. Potato Heads, Darth Vader, R2-D2, stormtrooper, and Yoda. In addition to the new 6" spuds, PPW is also releasing the same four Star Wars Mr. Potato Heads as 2" keyrings. Available: Now Price: 6" Potato Heads \$25.00; Keyrings \$5.49

GENTLE GIANT

WICKET JUMBO ACTION FIGURE

It was at San Diego Comic-Con International in 2010 that the line of vintage Kenner-inspired jumbo action figure reproductions were introduced with the stormtrooper on a card-back from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Since then we've had over 50 of these jumbo figures, but only two, so far, have come on card-backs from *Return of the Jedi*: the Gamorrean guard and biker scout (shipping in Q1 2015).



The third figure to be issued on a *Return of the Jedi* card-back is Wicket, with authentic packaging in keeping with the vintage Kenner experience. Wicket has been digitally scanned from a mint 3 1/4" scale Kenner original and reproduced at a jumbo size of 6 1/2" tall.

The figure comes in a resealable plastic outer clamshell to help protect and display this limited edition figure. Available: Q2 2015 Price: \$80

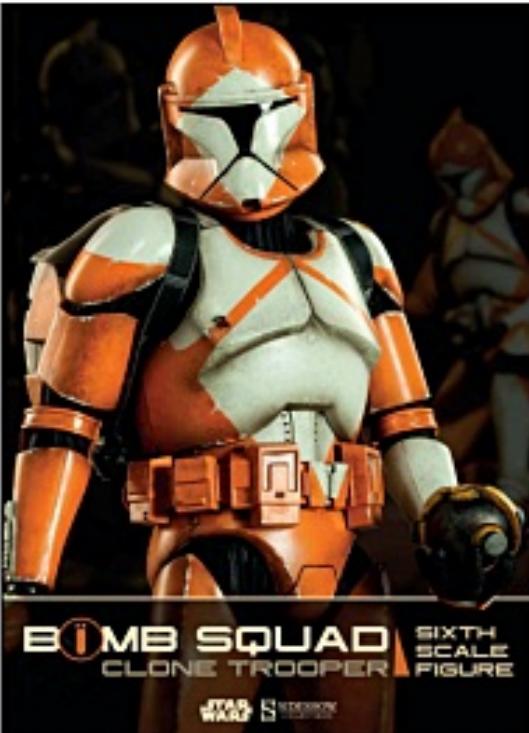
SIDE SHOW COLLECTIBLES



DARTH VADER LIFE-SIZED FIGURE

Sideshow Collectibles continues its range of life-sized figures with one of the greatest characters in film history: Darth Vader. The imposing Dark Lord of the Sith needs no introduction—except perhaps to the tune of the Imperial March!

This is the seventh life-size figure from Sideshow. Captured in 1:1 scale, and towering at over 7 feet tall, Lord Vader strikes a commanding pose on a cinematic light-up display base. Interchangeable hands allow collectors to re-create all of Vader's dramatic gestures. From his iconic helmet to his sweeping black cape, every detail of Vader's menacing costume has been painstakingly re-created to emulate his look from *Return of the Jedi*. Clad in a hand-tailored quilted suit, screen-accurate armor, and sequencing electronics in the chest box and belt, this is a "most impressive" piece! Available: June 2015 Price: \$7,999



BOMB SQUAD CLONE TROOPER: ORDNANCE SPECIALIST SIXTH SCALE FIGURE

The Militaries of Star Wars Sixth Scale figure collection from Sideshow continues to grow in number, with over 50 figures having been released from the prequels, original trilogy, Legends, and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. The latest to be dispatched is the bomb squad clone trooper who was called in to protect Naboo from biological warfare.

The clone ordnance specialist boasts his trademark orange deco with shoulder insignia, and is fully equipped with blasters, a backpack, and wire cutters for defusing deadly virus bombs. The bomb squad clone trooper is also available with a Sideshow exclusive base with ordnance designation artwork. Available: Feb 2015 Price: \$149.99



CAD BANE IN DENAL DISGUISE SIXTH SCALE FIGURE

Inspired by *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, Sideshow Collectibles presents the infamous bounty hunter Cad Bane in clone trooper Denal disguise in their Sixth Scale collection. Packing an arsenal of stolen weapons, Cad Bane will do whatever it takes to slip past Anakin Skywalker and Ahsoka Tano to deliver stolen Jedi secrets into the hands of Darth Sidious and collect his reward. In order to do this, the Duros gunslinger disguises himself as clone trooper Denal with the distinctive blue-streaked bucket helmet with night vision visor.

This figure is also available with a Sideshow exclusive base with 501st designation artwork. Available: Feb 2015 Price: \$149.99

WELOVEFINE

The team at WeLoveFine continues to bring us a huge variety of apparel for both men and women in a variety of styles.

SHORTS!

These stormtrooper denim shorts are one of their first line of women's summer shorts.

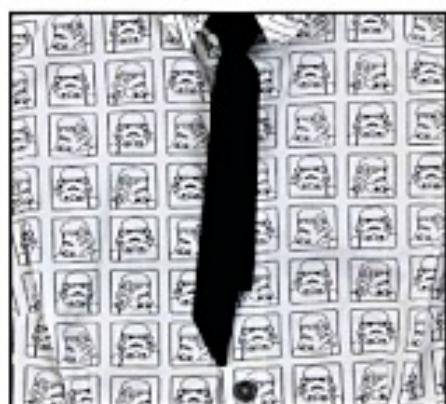
Available: Now Price: \$38



TOPS!

These button-up cotton tops featuring a stormtrooper print are available in both men's and women's' styles. The women's is sleeveless and features a skinny black tie accessory; the buttons on both are embossed with the Imperial logo!

Available: Now
Price: Men's \$48; Women's \$45



TANKS!

These women's tunic tanks each have an international *A New Hope* poster design in the skirt pattern (France and Hong Kong, respectively). Available: Now Price: \$34



WINNERS!

The latest batch of Star Wars design contest winners include picks from StarWars.com, Seth Green and Clare Grant! SubLevel Studios' Mark Daniels' grand-prize winning "The Bucking Bantha" is already a top seller! Available: Now Price: \$25 each





MADNESS!

WeLoveFine was thrilled to work with StarWars.com on the official, "This Is Madness" 2014 character tournament tee! Obi-Wan Kenobi was this year's winner. (\$25)
Available: Now Price: \$25

VOL
85

BANTHA TRACKS

BY THE FANS,
FOR THE FANS.

THE STAR WARS EXPERIENCE: IT'S ALWAYS LOCAL

Baseball, balloons, blood, and dinner—Imperial Style! Fans report in from 11 different countries on how they make a Star Wars statement—and share the joy—wherever they are. Star Wars fans... already in a neighborhood near you.

X MARKS THE SCOT!

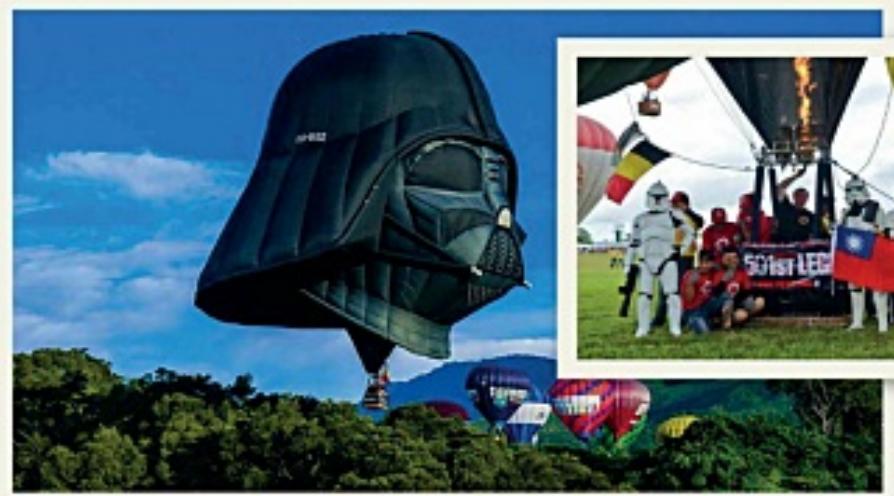
At the *Return of the Jedi* anniversary screening at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, California, the kiltsed troopers make a red carpet arrival. The SoCal Garrison of the 501st Legion is among the most called-upon fan groups for Star Wars appearances, and they carry out each request with professionalism and creativity... or show up in kilts! Photo by Kit Sovine.



THE FORCE OF HOT AIR

"The famous Darth Vader hot air balloon from Belgium was invited to fly in the Taiwan International Hot Air Balloon Festival," reports Roy Waung, commanding officer of the 501st Taiwan Outpost. "We were invited to add the dark side to the event."

Waung and the troops posed with fans and government officials in front of the seven-story Vader, owned and flown by Benoit Lambert of the Belgian 501st Legion.



GET IN TRACKS!



BLEEDING FOR THE EMPIRE

...or rather giving blood from the Empire, are members of the Polish 501st and Rebel Legions. "We set a good example and donated blood in our costumes," says Michal Guzowski, who costumed as a [blood red!] Imperial Royal Guard. "Because of us and Star Wars there were 66 donors who gave a total of 30 liters of blood! That day, the Force was strong with my city!"



STAR WARS WEST BY NORTHWEST ↗

In the Pacific Northwest of the United States, Star Wars fans promote the reading side of the Force. Pictured with Star Wars author Tom Angleberger are some of the usual suspects and R2-D2. Garrison Titan (501st) and Alpha Base (rebels) appeared at the American Library Association Winter meeting.



Outside the Comic Book Dungeon in Seattle, brothers Matt and Chris Goad were pleased to find a contingent of Star Wars fans in costume.

SUPERHERO STAR WARS

Thanks to Regina Layug-Rosero for submitting these photos from the Philippines. ↘



BANTHA TRACKS: BY THE FANS FOR THE FANS

MAY THE 4TH BE WITH ME →

Michael McLain, client service specialist at the Orlando Magic, poses with the "best band in the business" at a May the 4th event at Disney's Hollywood Studios. "The date is very significant to me as not only am I a huge fan of the Star Wars saga, but it is also my birthday," writes McLain. "It was a great day to spend with my friends and celebrate!"

We're glad we could work out this special holiday for your birthday, Michael. We have no excuse if we forget to send a card next year!



IMPERIAL WORLD →

The 501st Garrison of Hong Kong raises their flag at Hong Kong Disneyland. Photo submitted by Mankam, executive officer of 501st Legion Hong Kong Garrison.



PILOT PROTOCOL

Rebel pilots from Rebel Legion Echo Base meet a protocol droid who doesn't need to switch off, while celebrating the construction of a "real-sized" LEGO X-wing in Times Square, New York City.

"It was constructed with over five million pieces of LEGO!" reports Patrick Delieto. "With members from the Rebel Legion's Echo Base, the 501st Empire City Garrison, and New Jersey's Northeast Remnant, we were there to take pictures with fans for the event. What a great time it was!"



DINNER IMPERIAL STYLE

The Central Garrison of the 501st Legion celebrated their annual banquet together in true Imperial style.





TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

The Imperial field is set for the 6th annual Buffalo Bisons' Star Wars game, and a sellout crowd of baseball and Star Wars fans. "Vader threw out the first pitch," reports Lawrence Tetewsky, who also submitted the photo. "In the live-action battle after the game, Luke Skywalker battled Starkiller while Quinlan Vos, Leia, and the Bisons' mascots held off Imperial forces. The crowd booed loudly as the Emperor strode onto the field, setting up the climactic final battle between Jedi and Sith. This time, the Jedi prevailed, and Palpatine was exiled. But there's always next year..."



MONUMENTO MEXICO

Darth Vader, also known as Jorge Merino, the 501st Legion Mexican Garrison membership liaison officer, surveys most of Mexico City from atop the Torre Latinoamerica, one of the highest buildings in the downtown area. A stormtrooper stands guard at the Monumento a la Revolución near downtown Mexico City. Photos submitted by Rodrigo Alberto Mata Jimenez.

RED TROOPERS

Chuck McMenamin and his family take part in National Night Out, an annual event sponsored across the U.S. that encourages communities to unite against crime. Joining the McMenamins are members of the 501st Florida Garrison Makaze Squad and about 4,000 of their closest neighbors.



HAPPY → ANNIVERSARY CLUBE PORTUGAL

Thank you to Paulo Oliveira for these photographs of the Star Wars Clube Portugal (SWCP) anniversary celebration. The group organized a party with a costume contest and an exhibition about the Mandalorian universe.



INSIDER

WILLIAMS AND WILLIAMS

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra invited members of the Pacific Outpost to help create a fitting visual for their performance of "Star Wars and More! The Best of John Williams." The concert, which took place in Honolulu, Hawaii, was conducted by Stuart Chafetz. Photo submitted by John Williams.



SWISS TOYS

Members of the Swiss Garrison of the 501st Legion at a local Toys R' Us event. Photo submitted by Patric Bedie.



GIVING THE FOURTH

The Philippines Garrison donated in the name of the 501st Legion to the Tuloy Foundation Inc., thanks to their creative May the 4th event in the Resorts World Newport Mall. R2-D2 looks about to be crushed by adoring fans! Photo submitted by Manny Mendoza.



PARADE, PA

More than 350,000 parade-goers enjoyed the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Pittsburgh, where for the second year in a row the Rebel Legion placed first in their parade category. "You should have heard the crowds," says Danielle Volkar, the regional captain of the Rebel Legion. "It was crazy!"

A VISITOR FROM THE STARS!

NASA astronaut Gregory H. Johnson, rumored to be an avid Star Wars fan, was the guest of honor at this year's Yuri's Night Cleveland at the Great Lakes Science Center.

Yuri's Night is an international commemoration of Yuri Gagarin's first manned space flight, and the date, April 12th, also marks the launch of the first space shuttle. "The Great Lakes Base, Ohio Garrison, and Rancor Clan helped celebrate," reports Geoff "Krash" Krickhan of the Rebel Legion. "The event gives fans a chance to explore the history of space exploration, as well as have fun meeting some of their favorite characters. Astronaut Johnson was kind enough to join us for a few pictures."

Photo by Donald Huston.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

BANTHA TRACKS
Any original art, envelope art, comics, illustrations, news, stories, meeting information, or any materials voluntarily submitted become the property of *Bantha Tracks*. No compensation will be given for voluntary submissions, and there is

no guarantee of publication. Submissions to *Bantha Tracks* will not be returned.

Each submission must include the creator's name, age, contact details, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original,

and created by the person submitting it.

Send electronic files to banthatracks@starwars.com, or send your snail mail to *Bantha Tracks*, c/o Mary Franklin, P.O. Box 29901, San Francisco, CA 94129.





RIVERS AND PADAWANS

Winning the "Best Large Group" award, members of the MidSouth Garrison of the 501st Legion and the rebels of the Corellian Base marched in the Rivers and Spires Children's Parade in Tennessee. "We have enjoyed participating in this parade for many years," says Dan Enck, commanding officer of the Corellian Base. "This is a great family event we all look forward to each time."



SAY THAT FIVE TIMES QUICKLY ↗

"Here I am with friends of the Force celebrating May the 4th," reports Javier Bonet of Puerto Rico.



EDMONTON ON THE FOURTH ↗

From the Star Wars Day activities in Edmonton, Alberta, C. Stephen Campbell submitted these photos by Xan Reid.



THE FORCE FOR ALL AGES

"I really love these pictures because they reflect what we, the 501st are standing for," writes Manuel Miklis, commanding officer of the Austrian Garrison of the 501st Legion, "to bring happiness and a smile on the face for young and old."

The photos were taken in Klagenfurt, Austria.

YOUR OWN CUSTOM MIX OF STAR WARS

Whenever I'm asked, and sometimes when I'm not asked, I create original or modified cocktails with names that go with the themes of my friends' parties or of my own parties. We create our best originals when we're inspired by what we love. Okay... yeah... I like a good cocktail, but, much more than that, I love helping my friends have a good time. Heck, I like creating events so people I have not yet met have a good time. That brings me joy.

Every day, through letters and emails to Bantha Tracks and through my work at Lucasfilm I see Star Wars fans make the world a more joyful place. Their creations—their costumes, crafts, parties—are often not exactly Star Wars canon. And why not?

A perfect set of stormtrooper armor is great. It's every bit as iconic—okay, maybe more so—than the perfect Manhattan. Add a twist—the Captain America trooper by John Williams of Hawaii—and your perfect costume is surprising, fun, and joyful. It reflects multiple passions in one go.

Of course this wins the best group! This is the best group possible. We have a princess and a queen, a bounty hunter in a pale pink top, and a Kowakian monkey-lizard in a stroller. There is no original mix better than this. Thank you, Don Enck, for sending this picture. You made my day. Please pass on my compliments to the young ladies.



Get in Tracks!
Mary Franklin
Editor, Bantha Tracks



BANTHA TRACKS

BOUNTY HUNTERS



MEET THE STARS, SHOW THE EVIDENCE, WIN THE BOUNTY! *STAR WARS INSIDER'S* BOUNTY HUNTERS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY KOTOBUKIYA. EACH ISSUE'S WINNER WILL RECEIVE A FANTASTIC KOTOBUKIYA STAR WARS STATUE KIT! VISIT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/KOTOBUKIYA TO SEE MORE!

CRAFTSMANSHIP
KOTOBUKIYA



Friends in high places! Young George meets Peter Mayhew!

A FURRY FRIEND

Here's a picture of our 4-year old son, George, with Peter Mayhew at the Star Wars Weekends at Disney World in Orlando.

George wanted to know when he was going to turn into Chewbacca?

So we had to tell George that it was too hot for all that fur!—Dawn and Paul Nicholls, Cheshire, UK



Meeting... Amy Allen (Asyla Georges)



Catherine Taber (Padmé)



Chris Pangaro (E-97B)



Temuera Morrison (Jango Fett)



Matt Wood (General Grievous)



Jake Lloyd (Anakin Skywalker)

BOUNTY WINNER!

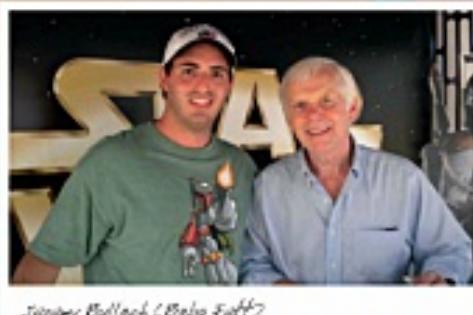
A FETT FAN... AND MORE!

I had the opportunity to go to Star Wars Weekends and Celebration V in 2010. It was a once in a lifetime experience to witness the biggest party on the East coast and to celebrate the 30th anniversary of *The Empire Strikes Back*!

Boba Fett is my favorite character, so it was really awesome to meet all of the Fetts. I really enjoyed the artists' alley, being an artist myself, where I got to meet dozens of wonderful and talented individuals. Many were so very kind to sketch something for me on a custom trading card I created for the event!—Michael Galiano, by email



Ashley Bakstein (Ahsoka Tano?)



Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett?)



Tim Rose (Yoda?)



Daniel Logan (Boba Fett?)



Vic Bradley Baker (Captain Rex?)



James Arnold Taylor (Obi-Wan Kenobi?)



Matt Carter (Anakin Skywalker?)



Alan Harris (Baze?)



Nathan Howell (Cantina?)



Ray Park (Darth Maul?)



Steve Edwards (Clone Jedi) Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan?)



and Tim Rose (Admiral Ackbar)!

BOUNTY HUNTERS ON THE MOVE!

Surrounded by clone troopers, Galactic Academy [Australia] member CBH-0525 Jackson Lloyd, was thrilled to meet Temuera Morrison (Jango Fett) at the Gold Coast Supanova 2014 convention in Queensland, Australia recently. Not only did he pose for many photos, he also graciously signed parts of their Armor and Helmets as a souvenir of the occasion.

Temuera was an absolute gentlemen and spent a lot of his time chatting with everyone (especially the Galactic Academy kids) and left some long-lasting good memories for all that were lucky enough to meet him!—Tony Lloyd, by email



Temuera Morrison greets the fans!

CAN YOU GO ONE BETTER?

HAVE YOU MET EWAN MCGREGOR? MAYBE YOU'VE JOKED AROUND WITH JAMES EARL JONES OR EVEN CUDDLED UP TO PETER CUSHING?! SEND PHOTOS, AND STORIES, OF YOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE STARS OF STAR WARS TO: BOUNTY HUNTERS, STAR WARS INSIDER VIA THE CONTACT DETAILS ON PAGE 3, OR EMAIL US AT STARWARSINSIDER@TITANEMAIL.COM

THE SAGA CONTINUES....

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DAVE FILONI

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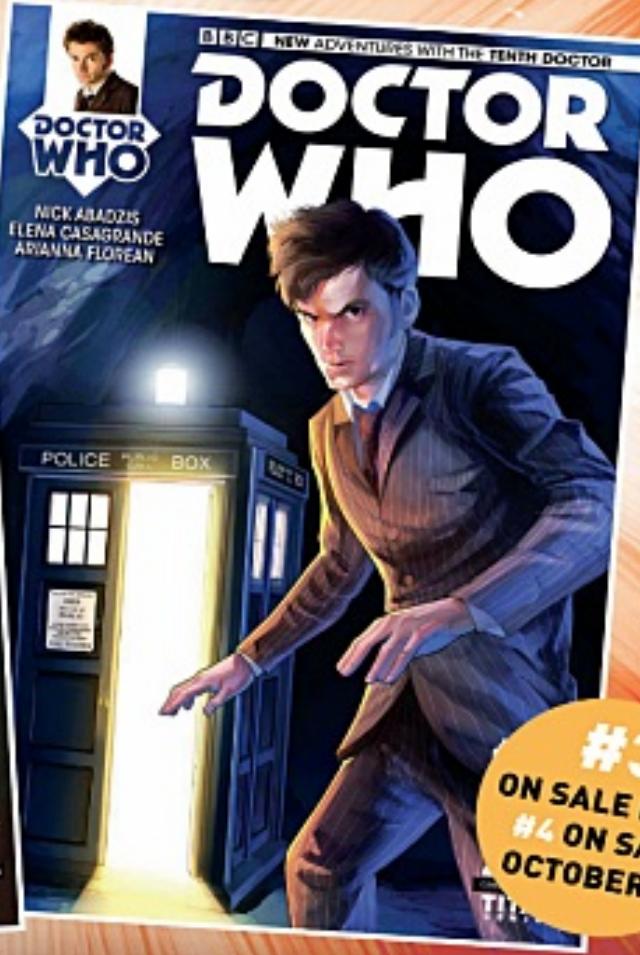
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